

COUNTRY LIFE

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AN IMPERIAL FAMILY GROUP.

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THE Journal for all interested in

Country Life and Country Pursuits.

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EDITORIAL NOTICE.

The Editor will be glad to receive for consideration photographs, instantaneous or otherwise, besides literary contributions, in the shape of articles and descriptions, as well as short stories, sporting or otherwise, not exceeding 2,000 words. Contributors are specially requested to place their names and addresses on their MSS. and on the backs of photographs. The Editor will not be responsible for the return of artistic or literary contributions which he may not be able to use, and the receipt of a proof must not be taken as evidence that an article is accepted. Publication in COUNTRY LIFE alone will be recognised as acceptance. Where stamps are enclosed, the Editor will do his best to return those contributions which he does not require.

PEASANTS AND WAR.

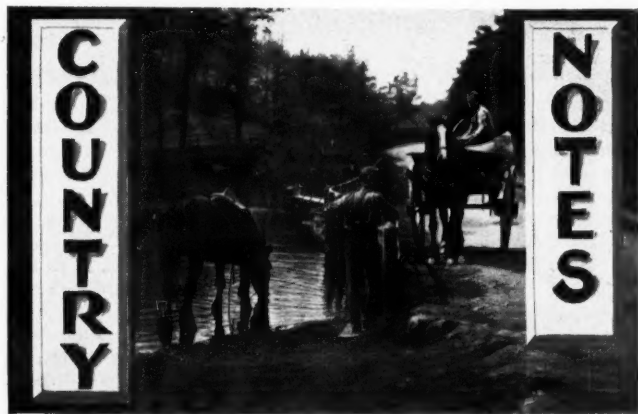
IT is common to hear such military officers as are old enough to remember the Crimea describe the great change that has taken place in recruiting. During the fifties, and to a still greater degree in the earlier years of the century, when "Boney" was a living name of dread and Wellington in his prime, the Army was for the most part replenished from the rural districts. And the yokel who was taken from the mire of the farm (cleanliness was not a virtue of husbandry then!), when he doffed his smock and laid aside the casing of straw or hay that he improvised into leggings, had not long worn a uniform before he became an excellent soldier. War then was even more dreadful than now, because it was more of a hand-to-hand affair, abounding in charges both of infantry and cavalry, and though the guns were not of long range, they played havoc when, as the Duke expressed it, the soldiers reserved fire till they could see the white of the enemy's eyes. The arrangements for transporting and feeding troops were most inadequate. Nor had surgery yet discovered the humane and effective methods to which we are now accustomed. After the battle of Waterloo amputations had to be done without anæsthetics; Sir Humphrey Davy had, it is true, discovered the use of nitrous oxide; but Sir James Simpson in England and Dr. Morton in America had much to do before chloroform became a necessity of the medicine chest, and far more limbs had to be cut off, as Lord Lister's antiseptic treatment had not been dreamed of, and doctors knew of no other way to deal with a compound fracture. It is but necessary to mention the name of Florence Nightingale to recall how recent is our elaborate nursing system. Further, the horrors of battle were perfectly well known to the most ignorant rustic. True, there was neither cable nor telegraph to flash the tidings, and a large proportion of the soldiers could neither read nor write, while postage was so very heavy that letters were few. If there had been more, the "enterprising" ha'penny newspapers that publish them had not yet been evolved. But in every ale-house there was some maimed and scarred old soldier with his jug of home-brew and his churchwarden pipe to entertain the rustics with tales of trench

and rampart, of hardship and suffering, and also of the joy of battle, riot, and carnage. In "My Uncle Toby" we have an immortal picture of the officer fighting the old fights over again at the hall; the men whom he and his like commanded, when they strayed back to the native village, leaving an arm or foot on some continental field, did the same thing in the cottage. It follows, therefore, that the peasant of a hundred years ago, when he took the King's shilling with his eyes open, must have been a pluckier, hardier mortal than his successor of to-day who enlists unwittingly, and, in the opinion of those well qualified to judge, is not of stuff equal to the town gamin, in many instances picked from the gutter. To enquire the reason of this is both interesting and important.

The most striking point of contrast between the condition of our peasants at the beginning and the end of the century lies in numbers; certainly more men used to be required. Scarcely anything was done by machinery. Corn was reaped with the sickle and threshed with the flail. As there were no railways, produce of all kinds had to be carted. The human hand had to be in every task. But there was no lack of labour. The peasant's food was coarse, his dress scanty, his home a hovel, but still he was full of vigour, and the problem that exercised philosophers was the excessive increase of population in country districts. By comparison he is now fed daintily, and enjoys a hundred comforts that formerly even the rich had to do without. Machinery has been introduced wholesale into agriculture, so that the bulk of work to be done would under no circumstances employ half of the old population. Yet everyone knows how difficult it is to procure labour. The old, the feeble, and the hopelessly stupid enormously outnumber the strong and effective. Further, the military test shows that the young peasant of to-day has not the pluck, spirit, nor endurance of his forefathers. If we compare one with the other, some reason may be found for this. An English peasant of a hundred years ago lived very much as a Transvaal Boer does now. We can realise what it was from reading the early lives of such as arrived at distinction. The vigour that showed so well in war was displayed equally in the arts of peace. A boy was set to work in the fields at what we now think an outrageously early age. At seven, George Stephenson was "herdin' kye" for twopence a day. William Cobbett had to go out bird-scaring quite as young. It was the ordinary way with the peasant. Nor was it altogether so bad as it looks. The boy of the period missed what advantage there is in "passing his standards," but the open-air life made of him a sturdy, hardy lad by the time he was fifteen, and if he had an inclination to study, we see from the examples cited that he could make an astonishing use of his opportunities. If he did not take to learning, he at any rate knew something about horses and cattle, could ride, and probably shoot with the old flintlock that hung above the fireplace, till its use was stopped by the institution of gun licences. If the village boy of to-day has gained in some respects he has lost in others. He is too much in school and too greatly afflicted with lessons, and he has not the compensation of those organised outdoor games enjoyed by the children of the middle classes. Cricket and football do not prosper in the small country school. It is curious, but true, that a poor town boy has, as a rule, more real pastime in the open air than the poor country boy. Ask the curate, and he will tell you how difficult it is to keep cricket alive among the pupils of the National School. In athleticisms of various sorts the urban youth gets rid of his surplus energy in park or playground. As a harrier he even does more cross-country running.

Now a century ago the village was not nearly so dull as it is to-day. The rough, stalwart young Englishmen whose fathers had borne the brunt of the Peninsular War were certainly not over-refined in their amusements, but they made them subservient to their strongest instinct—the fighting. It was the day of *Bell's Life* and the prize-ring. At every fair and "statis" there was a boxing booth, and rustic sports were not complete unless the local champions had a bout at quarter-staff for a guinea or a new hat. When they were not bruising one another the favourite substitute was to set two animals by the ears. Their pets were the little black-and-tan that could kill its own weight in rats in fewer minutes than it weighed pounds, the "tarrier" that could draw the badger from under a pile of faggots, and a victorious strain of gamecocks. The long unbroken peace was fatal to these brutal amusements, and who would dare to advocate their revival now? Such good as there was in them is supplied equally well by cricket, football, hockey, cross-country runs, and other diversions of the day. Quite so; but our point is that the peasant and his child do not participate in them. The old amusements are taken away and nothing is put in their place. It is a sober fact that, barring the delight of an occasional cheap trip, the most exciting amusement of the married yokel is to lean against the pig-stye wall, smoke his pipe, and let imagination revel in calculating the potential bacon of the porker. As to the boy, he is commanded by the school-master, whose business it is to drill into his mind precisely the same information as is judged suitable for an artisan or shop boy. Sir John Lubbock has, we notice, been giving his attention to

the matter, and proposes to vary the monotony by means of botany. That is very good as far as it is meant to instruct the boy in his surroundings, but it never will fully occupy the place of that indescribable love picked up in roaming the fields. Our experience of the average country boy is that he does not know the old names of plants and flowers, or of birds and beasts; he has been prohibited from bird's-nesting, and he cannot climb a tree; a fly he could not make to save his life, and he does not know one end of a gun from another. Need we wonder that he is discontented in mind and soft in body! And is the matter of no concern to the State? Depend upon it, it is of the very highest. The recuperative power of the country to-day, as in the past, lies in its peasantry. We may be able to get on without them as soldiers, though that is by no means certain, but if a long and exhausting war has to be carried on (and it looks now as if England in the coming years will, as often before, have to keep her head with her hands), it is on the peasant we shall have to depend; it is his wholesome blood that has in the past reinvigorated the town and the factory. Unless English statesmen have ceased to look forward at all, that is a consideration that should weigh heavily with them. The revival of a healthy peasantry is a necessity of the hour.



WE cannot affect to be surprised at the news—which, indeed, has been expected for a long time by those who knew the inner ways—that Lord Methuen is—possibly in some courteous form—to be superseded in his command. No more colossal blunder, no more unaccountable mistake than the business of the Modder River was ever perpetrated. The tragic death of General Wauchope and his dying words to the men of his brigade lent emphasis to it. The recent return of the colonel of the 9th Lancers, under arrest for refusing to attempt the impossible, is an indication of the kind of difficulty that has been encountered. In fact, Lord Methuen's appointment was a mistake from the beginning.

To those who have themselves suffered personal loss in the course of the war—and they are far too many—it may seem almost invidious that particular sympathy should be claimed in this case or in that. But in spite of this, the universal feeling of acute sorrow concerning the untimely death of Lord Ava must needs find vent. In the first place, his father—Lord Dufferin, the most courtly, able, and accomplished of men—has been more than well-beloved of his fellow-countrymen ever since he wrote the "Letters from High Latitudes." And the young man was the apple of his father's eye. It was a delight to see the father and son together, the best of friends, albeit they were as opposite as the two poles. Lord Ava was no genius—rather the reverse; but, to the end, he was a typical British boy, full of the love of sport and adventure. To meet him when he was ranching in America, or when he was officiating at Ranelagh, or in that North of Ireland which he and his father loved so well, was to love him for his heartiness and for his look of overflowing health. His death is a severe blow to his aged father, and he will be mourned by a very wide circle of acquaintances and friends.

The late Viscount Gort, who passed away last week, was one of the oldest of the Irish peers, having been born in 1819. His son, who succeeds to the title, is married to a daughter of the late Mr. Surtees, author of "Handley Cross," "Sponge's Sporting Tour," and other well-known sporting works. To be descended from the creator of the immortal Jorrocks is as honourable as to be of Royal blood.

Two points have been specially emphasised by the results of the war that we are waging in South Africa—the value of mobility and the value of entrenchments. This being so, it is, rather curious to read Gibbon's account of the value that was set on these factors of successful warfare by the Romans, as evidenced by the equipment of their legionaries, especially, as it would seem, designed to meet these ends. "Besides their arms,

which the legionaries scarcely considered as an encumbrance, they were laden with their kitchen furniture, the instruments of fortification, and the provision of many days. Under this weight, which would oppress the delicacy of the modern soldier, they were trained by a regular step to advance in about six hours near twenty miles." Thus the magnificent Gibbon, whence it would appear that two of the most essential conditions of success in modern warfare were no less essential then. Figures are dumb things to most of us, and it is, perhaps, hard to realise the extent of the Boer entrenchments as reported on the Modder River—that is to say, forty miles, not much less than the distance from London to the South Coast. Even to guard efficiently such an extent of entrenchment with a moderate army must require much mobility.

We are afraid that it is more than likely to be correct that the sighting of the Lee-Enfield rifles served out to the Mounted Infantry and of the weapons served out to the Yeomanry is inaccurate, not only in point of elevation, as was to be expected, but also in point of direction. The difference in the matter of elevation is not very serious; in fact, there are very few rifles made with regard to which the figures on the back sight can be trusted as precisely accurate. A rifle has, in fact, the same individual eccentricities of character as a yacht or a steamship. As you may build two yachts on precisely the same lines, and fit them with precisely the same sail area, and find that they are by no means equal either in stability or speed, so two rifles, apparently identical to a hair's-breadth, will behave differently. But their eccentricities in the matter of elevation are soon learned. Indeed, one could ascertain them easily by shooting at a bottle towed astern of a vessel. On the other hand, it is clear that in attempting to correct what Major the Hon. T. F. Fremantle calls the well-known phenomenon of "drift" a more or less serious mistake has been made.

The expression "drift" is one which the unlearned may not understand without explanation. Everybody, of course, knows that a bullet, like every other missile, travels in a parabola, and that the great advantage obtained by the adoption of small calibres and high muzzle velocity is that the trajectory is far more flat than with the earlier rifles. For example, supposing a man to be shooting prone at 500yds. with the Martini rifle, you could have walked across the range at 300yds. with perfect safety if the man were shooting accurately, and if you were not more than 7ft. high. With the '303, under like conditions, you would have to crouch below 4ft., and with the '256, or Mannlicher, below 3ft. But probably not all the world is really familiar with the well-known phenomenon of "drift." The bullet not only rises and falls, but also it has a tendency to take a lateral direction, owing to the spiral grooving. Thus the old match rifle at 1,000yds. had a natural "drift" of 2½ft. to the right. In the new rifles the "drift" is to the left, the allowance made being 1ft. 6in. in 1,000yds., which Major Fremantle thinks is not enough. The mistake which is apparently made in sighting these rifles is that of over-correction; and it is very unfortunate.

There is no doubt that in this matter of correct arms, of arms not only correct but suited to the men who have to use them, the Boers have a great advantage. It has even been said—although we do not quite believe it—that every Boer has had a rifle specially fitted to him. That may be true of the leading marksmen, but it is hardly likely to be true of the whole of the miscellaneous crowd of burghers, young and old, who have been commandeered. To fit every British marksman with a special rifle would be almost out of the question, especially when it has to be done in a hurry. But we are very distinctly of opinion that in time of peace some steps might be taken in that direction. For example, it has frequently happened to the writer of this note to borrow a rifle from a competitor at Bisley in order to amuse himself in a light-hearted way by entering for some competition. In each such case the lender has been at the pains to explain the peculiarities and tendencies of his beloved rifle, and it has been the rarest thing in the world to get hold of a rifle of which the owner declared that it had no peculiarities. Even when such a rifle had been obtained, the results were frequently disappointing, and on complaint made that the rifle threw high or low, the owner would reply, "Oh! you took a full sight, and I take a fine one," or *vice versa*. In fact, the more a man knows his rifle the better.

Some time ago we had the honour of suggesting the value that telephoto lenses might have for surveying purposes in South Africa. We hear of lenses that give good results to the distance of forty miles, and in the clear air of the South African plateau their power ought to be at its maximum. But supposing forty miles to be an exaggerated estimate, let us divide the range by ten—a liberal deduction; we then get a four-mile range, which is sufficient for most practical uses, and gives a result, perhaps, more to be relied on than the sketch of the most finished artist,

who is anxious about being "sniped" or cut off. Suggestions have been made for the use of telephoto apparatus from balloons, but in view of the necessity of absolutely rigid immobility in a camera so fitted, we can hardly think it would answer well in those conditions. Still any officer who may deem it worth his while to take out privately long-distance lenses and arrangements is likely to deserve well of his country.

On many sides one hears talk of the effect which the war is producing on sport. The Grand Military, for example, is gone. The University Boat Race will suffer not a little. Mr. W. A. L. Fletcher, having taught Cambridge how to beat Oxford, was going to try to train a victorious crew on the Isis. He is now gone to South Africa, to the Tugela, or the Modder—but not to row. If his younger brother, the famous Liverpool shot, has gone also, it is bad for the Boers. Mr. Maclean has volunteered. Mr. Bourne is a militia officer, and cannot coach. Mr. Willis, too, must leave the Cam to be mobilised with his militia battalion, and the University battalions are providing a good many men for the front. Thereupon it has been suggested that these men should receive degrees *honoris causa*, and some critics have been unkind enough to laugh. Why? If ever men deserved degrees for honour's sake, those surely are the undergraduates who face Boer bullets rather than "the small but well-armed tribe of the examiners."

So far as the winter has yet gone we are not doing much in the way of excessive rain or snow fall to make up for the deficiencies of previous years; but for all that it is the opinion of a good many who have given attention to the water supply question that the greater continuance and intensity of the frost this winter than in the two that have gone before will have a great effect for good. The water on the surface that drains quickly off is not of much use to us; but when that surface has been made porous by the alternate expansion and contraction of frost and thaw there is a chance for the water to get down to the deep reservoirs that feed the springs.

The publication of the figures relating to our agricultural imports raises the question whether a maximum has been reached or not. If we look at the total alone, it would appear that the reply must be negative. Last year was a record. This country paid no less than £184,584,796 for foreign produce, and exported about £18,500,000 worth, leaving £166,000,000 net. But on a closer scrutiny it is found that some of the more formidable items are approaching a standstill. Not quite so much was paid for corn or flour as in 1898 or in 1892, and live meat is on the decrease. The total value of dead meat, however, keeps steadily rising, and so does that of dairy produce. In seven years the former increased by £10,500,000, the latter by over £4,500,000.

Two reasons may be given for the growth of imports. One is the natural increase of population, and the other an abnormal commercial prosperity, both of which expand the consuming power of the nation. From other returns it may be seen that the great body of working men were almost in constant employment last year, and were also in receipt of good wages. They are by far the largest customers for frozen beef and mutton, *rs. per lb.* butter, and other kinds of cheap produce. Such English farmers as are doing well lay themselves out to provide a superior quality of meat or butter, and the improvement in their affairs is not much affected by what comes from abroad. Nevertheless, the figures show that those whose motto is "British markets for the British" have an immense field for their operations.

A Wiltshire clergyman, who expresses himself as full of sympathy for what has been said here about rural education, asks us the following question. After saying that all his life he has been trying to help what we are driving at, he goes on, "Agriculture must consist of theory and practice. What theory would you teach in the schools—*e.g.*, Would you substitute a lesson on poultry for grammar as a special subject? What kind of pigs to keep for a lesson on geography? Our new continuation schools are all commercial—commercial geography set to country boys with a view to County Council grant. What wonder if they chuck the whole thing as they do, and on moonlight nights go out footballing! I am encouraging volunteering now, but I will do anything to further the county interest as regards education, as leading boys to love the country, but our schoolmasters must be differently trained for that purpose."

This letter, which was not primarily written for publication, expresses exactly the more intelligent attention to this question—a feeling that something is wrong, and a groping for the definite steps to set it right. It would, however, be rash for one individual to draw up such a syllabus as is suggested. Yet there are one or two points that are obvious. The first business

is to interest the boys by turning the pleasantest outdoor pursuits into avenues for useful knowledge. Take such a subject as entomology, for instance. It is of prime importance to the bee keeper, the apple grower, or the gardener, the farmer, the owner of a poultry run. By operating on the natural bug-hunting instinct of the boy, and not being in too great a hurry to fill his small head with utilitarian and business ideas, it can be made not only a fascinating study but one of great service afterwards. So with botany, ornithology, and kindred sciences, that can only be learned out of doors, and the more practical the teaching the better the boys would like it.

Happy is the pleasant village of Ticehurst in Sussex, in that it can boast so munificent a patron as Mr. Campbell Newington. It is the dulness of country life in winter which is half the cause of the rural exodus; but there will be no dulness at Ticehurst, or, at any rate, it will be mitigated, and the place might be called Enticehurst. Thanks to Mr. Newington, it now boasts an institute, with the upkeep of which the donor charges himself, and the institute contains a reading-room, billiard-room, and games-room. Hard by is a cricket ground and a children's playground. The whole sounds like a village in Paradise. *O si sic omnes*; or, to adapt a stock phrase, "Other rich men please copy."

We are getting used to famines of all kinds, and there are new famines—that of coal, for example—to which we shall have to grow accustomed. But the most grim of them all is the dearth of hearse horses in London, consequent upon the ravages of the influenza epidemic among the aged. Never—or hardly ever—has such a strain been placed upon the undertakers as at present. Their prancing Flemish stallions are, of course, fit for nothing except to drag a hearse; therefore it is clearly out of the question that the undertakers should have in their stables a stud more than sufficient to meet the ordinary demand, that is, at the rate of about 22 per 1,000 per annum. But now the rate has gone up to 37, which means that quite a large percentage of hearses and mourning carriages must be drawn by coloured horses. An easy way out of the difficulty would be to dye a sufficient number of white and grey horses, much in the same way as our cavalry horses are stained khaki in South Africa. Indeed, those who drive in cabs in black coats or black dresses would not be sorry if the practice of dyeing white and grey horses were universal.

A visit to the "Wild West" of Ireland must convince any sceptic what a splendid sporting country the picturesque counties of Mayo, Kerry, Galway, and Clare would become with very little care and protection. As it is, however, a wild lawlessness exists which puts law and order at defiance, and precludes any hope of improving the head of game under present provisions.

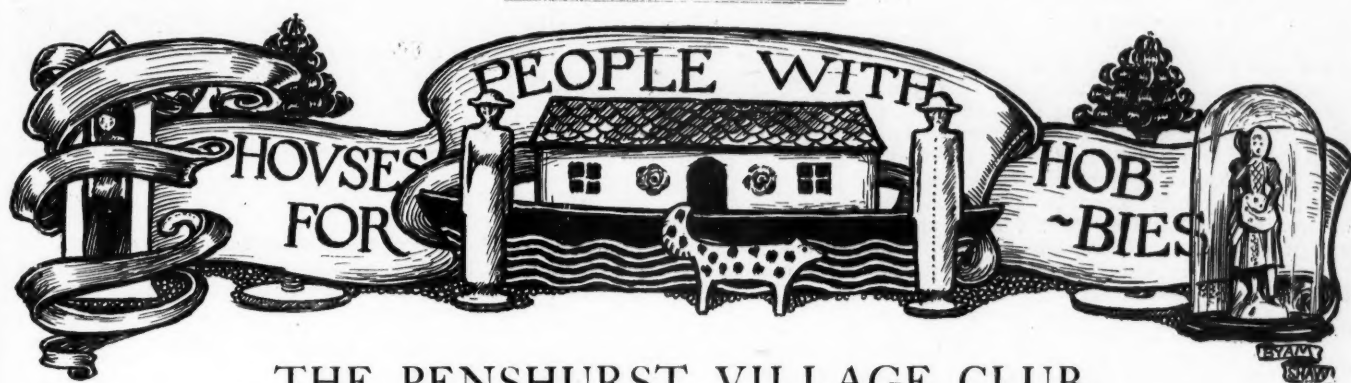
The want of "backbone" in the Government in not putting its foot down firmly on the doings of the "League" which started operations at Westport, County Mayo, seems to have encouraged the peasantry into thinking they can do as they like. As an instance of this, it may be mentioned that a District Inspector of Constabulary, who recently caught four men red-handed in pursuit of game with dogs and guns, reported the matter, expecting a prosecution would at once be instituted. What was his surprise to find that although the men had neither game, gun, nor arms licences—which latter, under the Peace Preservation Act, must be obtained by all "having or carrying guns"—he was told not to take any notice of the case, as it would only raise a disturbance amongst the people.

The cunning of the fox and the blunder-headed way in which the foxhound meets it were exemplified in a very striking fashion near Leicester last week. Seeing that the door of Broughton Astley Church was conveniently open, and unaware or reckless of the fact that a congregation was present, Mr. Fox entered the building with the pack in full cry behind him. Probably he had picked up from his ancestors a vague notion of the privilege of Sanctuary, but the hounds were in no mood to observe ancient etiquette. The church was to them the same as a barn, and to the horror of some of the congregation, although perhaps to the amusement of others, they broke their fox in the church. The hounds were the well-known pack of Mr. Fernie, whose favourites were generally eccentric last week, for they killed another fox on the Leicester cricket ground. Mr. Fernie is about to present the mounted mask of this latter fox to the Leicester Cricket-Club to ornament their Pavilion. But it is to be feared that the proposal to pay a like compliment to the church would not meet with the approval of the Chancellor of the Diocese, for, of course, it could not be put up without a faculty, which at any rate would cost more than the trophy. But the occurrence ought to be commemorated somehow.

Poor Bates, the Yorkshire professional cricketer, was always an unfortunate man throughout his career. Good with bat and ball alike, his most famous feat, perhaps, was the performance of the "bat trick" in the Australian match on the Melbourne ground in 1882. It was on the very same ground, five years later, that he received the injury to one of his eyes which put a very premature end to his brilliant cricketing career. He was but forty-four years of age when he died at the beginning of last week, died, as many have died, from the effects of a chill caught at a funeral, the funeral of a Yorkshire cricket professional of the old school, John Thewlis. Thewlis had had his fair innings, but Bates, poor fellow, seems to have been a mark for fortune's peculiar spite. He will be much regretted.

There have been some curious portents in the sky lately, which, taken in conjunction with the war and the end of the

century, would certainly have seemed to foretell prodigies to a less rationalistic age. There was in the first place that strange meteor, seen by many independent witnesses at various places in the Southern Counties, crossing the sky with a band of white light in the full glare of the noonday sun. Further, there was on the 11th an appearance of halo around the sun, with four mock suns in its circumference, and also bars of iridescent light at a distance on either side of the sun, low down towards the horizon. These "sun-dogs," common phenomena in Canada, are very rare in this country. In Canada and the Northern States of America they are considered a sign of severe cold likely to follow in the course of a few days, and people familiar with the country say that it is a sign that hardly ever fails of fulfilment. By all appearances it is a sure prophet of the same things to come in this country, for frost began again the following day, and is steadily increasing up to the time of writing.



THE PENSHURST VILLAGE CLUB.

WE believe that nothing is much more deserving of the gratitude of the country than measures or suggestions for making the country life of the poorer classes more interesting to them. It is this lack of interest that is drawing so many of them into the towns, and producing that lack of agricultural labour of which we hear so much. It is a movement with which one cannot but feel much sympathy when one tries to realise the monotony of the life of the country dweller, who has none of the opportunities or the tastes that make country life what it is to the country gentleman.

In one of the most picturesque villages in England—it would scarcely be too much to say the most picturesque—Penshurst, in Kent, the wise generosity of a rich man has lately put up a village club that seems to us so well thought out and executed in every way, for the purposes of combined utility and beauty, that it may perhaps serve as a model for any who may have it in their minds to confer a like boon on their own village, and may even suggest to others who have not as yet any such scheme in their minds both a good bit of work and a good manner of doing it. A general impression of the building, as it appears from the pretty main street of the village, may be gathered from the first illustration. It is not, perhaps, necessary to emphasise the justness of the architectural proportions, and the fine taste that has enabled the builder to give us the sensation that we are looking on a thing of beauty, while in no detail is there any apparent effort to attain more than the useful. It may be said at the outset that the principles that directed the building throughout were simplicity, economy, and utility. To assume, as sometimes appears to be assumed, that this implies any sacrifice of beauty, is to misinterpret most perversely, as it seems to us, the meaning of the architect's art.

The chief rooms of the building are the entrance hall, with its bar, where, however, only non-intoxicants are sold, with the

reading-room going from it on the one side and the large hall on the other. There is a smoking and billiard room above. These are the principal rooms, and of these the largest by far is, of course, the hall or concert-room. It is divided into the auditorium, which entirely occupies the greater part, and the stage, on which theatricals are performed and concerts given. By an ingenious device the swinging lamps that light the hall can be turned at will so that the reflectors throw their illumination on the body of the hall or on the stage, or, if less light is needed, on the walls. The adjuncts of the stage, with its green-room, etc., are well thought out, very convenient and complete. The arc of the wall over the drop scene is occupied by a fine relief representation, in plaster, of St. George and the Dragon, designed by Mr. Michael Murphy, some of whose sculpture work the reader may have seen in the Royal Academy from time to time. He is also the designer of the shield and legend that appear in the illustration of the building from the outside.

Naturally, a better idea than can be given in the text is

conveyed by the plans of the architect, Mr. M. Maberly Smith, which we are able to give herewith, in regard to the detailed proportions. They are absolutely simple of comprehension, even by those who have no special knowledge of architecture. The whole of the building is constructed of local stone, brick and timber, oak being largely used, and by local labour. In saying that economy was studied as one of the leading principles of construction, this was not meant to imply any cheapness



THE CLUB-HOUSE.

in material used or in initial expenditure. Nothing superfluous was given, but, at the same time, all materials were of the best and most durable quality. This is, of course, in itself an essential of the truest economy that "pays in the long run"; but our meaning, more particularly, was that the building has been done with a view to economy in the keeping up. Thus the frames of the window glass are all in ironwork, in a setting of oak that

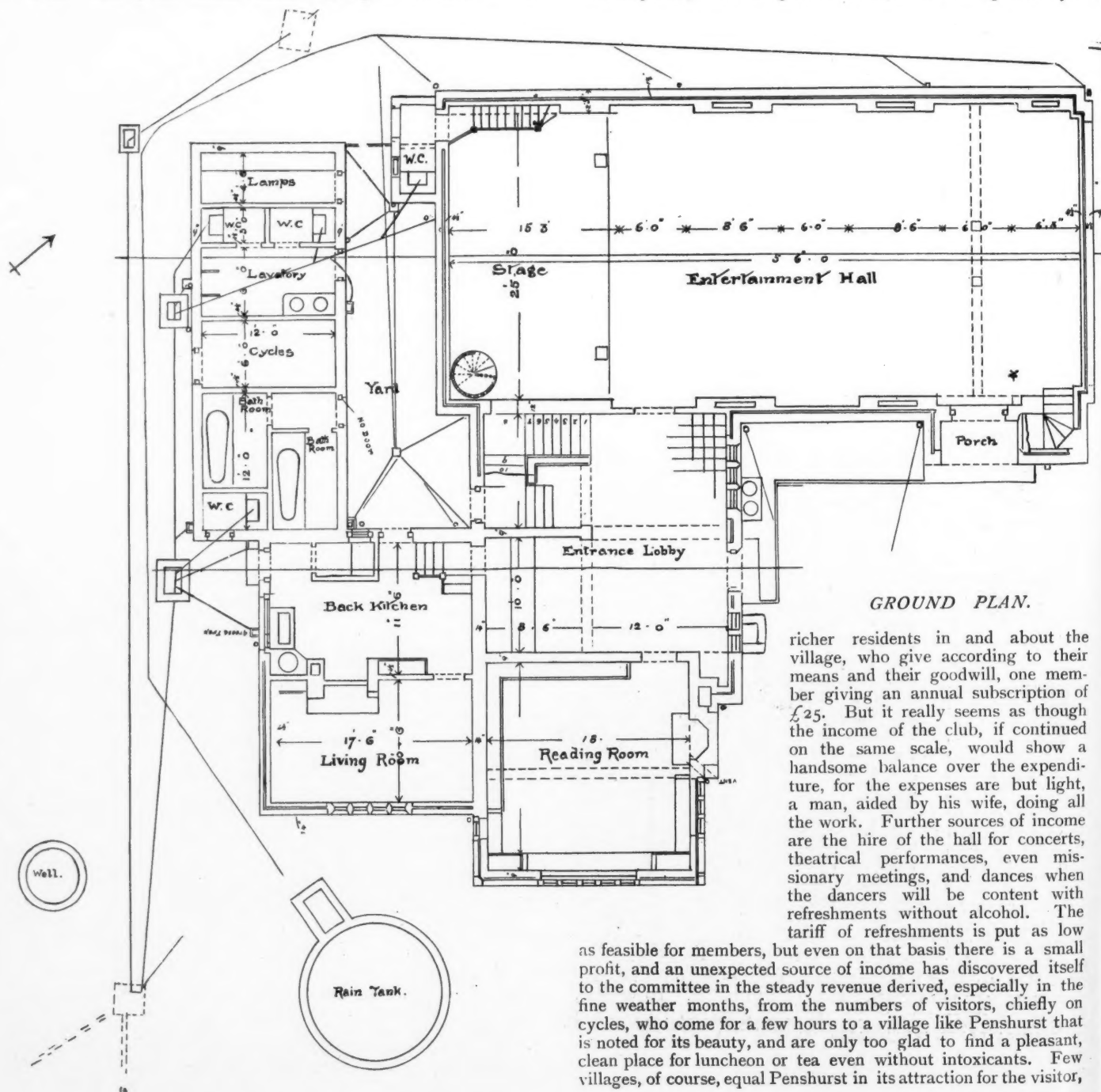
will require no painting, and throughout the building there will be scarcely any painting of outside woodwork to be done—a truly economical arrangement. The furniture of the rooms, as plain as possible, is yet comfortable enough and durable, of the pleasant green colour that is now fashionable. The cork matting is put right down on the concrete of the floors. All is arranged with a view to the greatest possible cleanliness.

As to the cost of the whole structure, it has been some £4,250, including fittings, but it is likely that at the present time, owing to the rise in labour and cost of materials, a 5 per cent. addition, at the least, would have to be made. This fine building was a munificent gift to the village on the part of Mr. F. C. Hills, who had already done so very much for the good and the beauty of Penshurst, and there seems to be little doubt that, once so started, the club will be able to pay its way. Its sources of income are, in the first place, the subscriptions of its members. The legal figure of the subscriptions, according to the club rules, is 5s. annually for adults, and 2s. 6d. for young members. Women are allowed to be members on the same terms, with the restriction that they shall not be in the club after 6 p.m., at which hour smoking is permitted in the reading-room. During the earlier hours smoking is forbidden in the



THE NEW LAUNDRY.

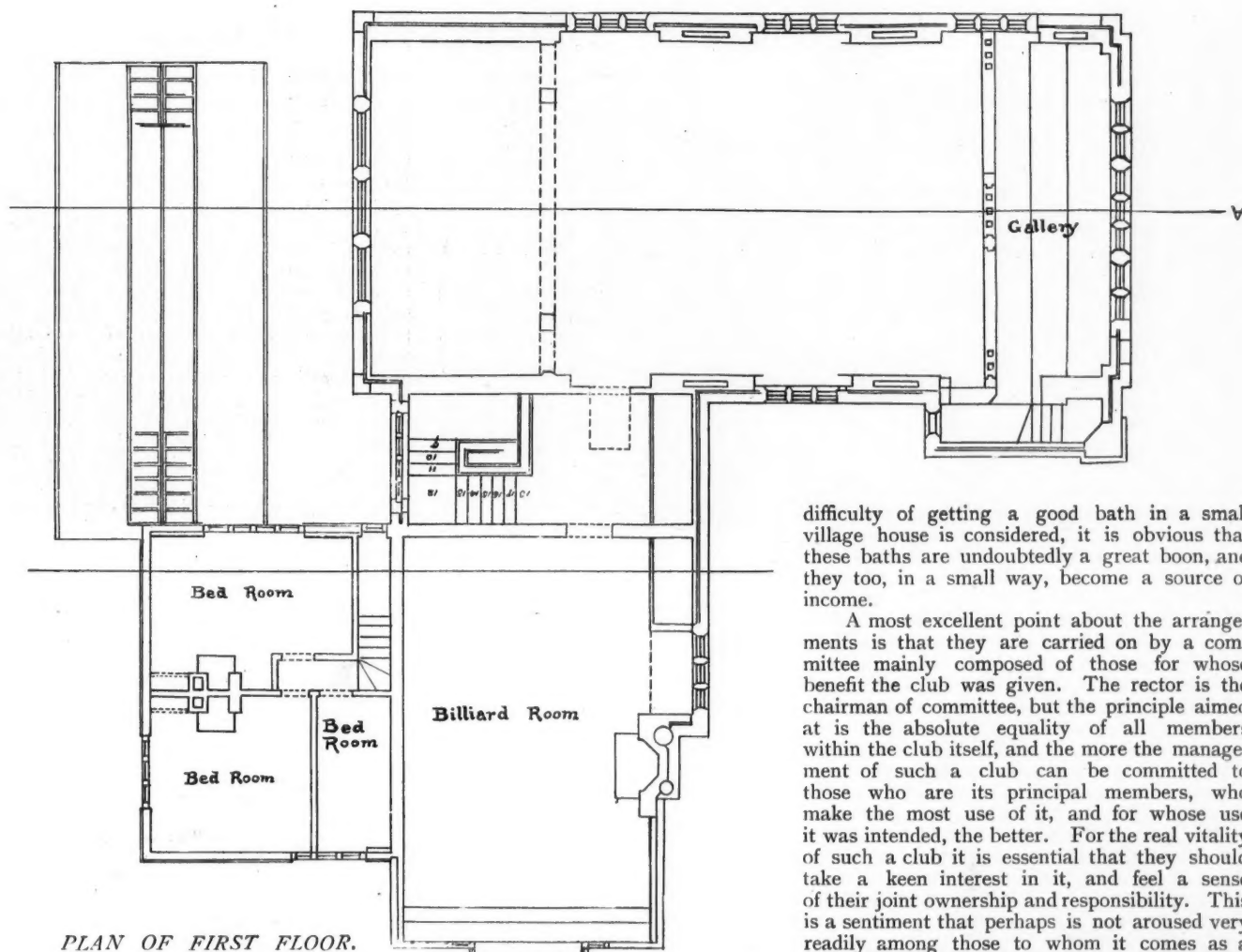
reading-room, but permitted everywhere else on the club premises. But in addition to these minimum and obligatory subscriptions, the club gets an income from the generosity of



GROUND PLAN.

richer residents in and about the village, who give according to their means and their goodwill, one member giving an annual subscription of £25. But it really seems as though the income of the club, if continued on the same scale, would show a handsome balance over the expenditure, for the expenses are but light, a man, aided by his wife, doing all the work. Further sources of income are the hire of the hall for concerts, theatrical performances, even missionary meetings, and dances when the dancers will be content with refreshments without alcohol. The tariff of refreshments is put as low

as feasible for members, but even on that basis there is a small profit, and an unexpected source of income has discovered itself to the committee in the steady revenue derived, especially in the fine weather months, from the numbers of visitors, chiefly on cycles, who come for a few hours to a village like Penshurst that is noted for its beauty, and are only too glad to find a pleasant, clean place for luncheon or tea even without intoxicants. Few villages, of course, equal Penshurst in its attraction for the visitor,



PLAN OF FIRST FLOOR.

but all can hope in their measure to reap some little profit from this source. The tariff at which refreshment is supplied to visitors who are not members of the club is slightly higher than members' rates, but still strictly moderate. A small charge is made for the use of the billiard-table, and a feature of the club that deserves a special mention is a couple of excellent bath-rooms. When the

difficulty of getting a good bath in a small village house is considered, it is obvious that these baths are undoubtedly a great boon, and they too, in a small way, become a source of income.

A most excellent point about the arrangements is that they are carried on by a committee mainly composed of those for whose benefit the club was given. The rector is the chairman of committee, but the principle aimed at is the absolute equality of all members within the club itself, and the more the management of such a club can be committed to those who are its principal members, who make the most use of it, and for whose use it was intended, the better. For the real vitality of such a club it is essential that they should take a keen interest in it, and feel a sense of their joint ownership and responsibility. This is a sentiment that perhaps is not aroused very readily among those to whom it comes as a new factor in their life, but is of rapid growth as soon as it is once understood. The fusion of classes that is essential and inevitable in a club of this kind is one of its very best features, for it is quite certain that what the different classes need for better appreciation of each other is nothing more nor less than better mutual knowledge.

The club is open on weekdays from 9 a.m. till 10 p.m., and on Sundays from 6 till 10 in the evening.

ON THE GREEN.

THE influenza has been holding the golfer heavily in its grip during the last week or two, so we may hope that he has spent the interval of suffering and convalescence in a conscientious study of the new rules. We can imagine nothing more lowering for a raised temperature than such a course. Therefore, if a man has had the influenza, there can be no excuse for him if he knows not the rules. On the other hand, knowledge of the rules would, perhaps, be waived for the sake of blissful ignorance of influenza. One cannot have everything.

Some of the scribes write with no little sarcasm of the wisdom of the medical board that has declared Mr. John Ball unfit for service with the Yeomanry in South Africa. They recall the case of J. H. Taylor, twice champion, and still the only rival that Vardon has to fear, ploughed for the Navy for "defective eyesight"—save the mark! But the medical board may be justified, none the less, may even have been justified in Taylor's case, for it is possible that a man's eye may be accurate enough for the correct focussing of a golf ball and measuring of distance from hand to ball, but yet entirely colour-blind. And it is important for a sailor to be able to distinguish the port and starboard lights. A little confusion might arise out of inability to make such distinction. But we are surprised, nevertheless, to hear of any lurking weakness in Mr. Ball rendering him unfit for hard service in the field. If he remains, however, it will make the amateur championship meeting the more interesting.

It does not seem quite certain, however, that the sarcasm of these scribes has any good foundation, for whereas there is a report that Mr. Ball has been rejected, there is also a report, which claims no less authority, that his services have been accepted. It may be asked, why not put the question straight to Mr. Ball himself? But Mr. Ball has a "Brer Rabbit"-like faculty for lying low and saying nothing, and his disposition does not run much to talking about himself. His view is the essentially unmodern one, that whether he goes to Africa or stays at home is a matter that concerns himself first, the Boers secondly, and the general public not at all. But greatness has its penalties.

Then there is the report that Vardon is going to the States for a while to give exhibitions of golf. That report, we believe, is not questioned, although such a mass of tales credible and the reverse is apt to accumulate about the doings of great men. Vardon goes, we are told, shortly, returning in time for the championship in June, and going back again for a second time in October. We have heard rumours of his going before.



THE CONVALESCENT HOME.

The Quest for Unknown Birds.

BY the death of Mr. John Whitehead, at the early age of thirty-eight, England has lost one of the most brilliant of field naturalists and successful collectors that this or any other country has yet produced. Though primarily interested in birds, he took the greatest interest in all branches of natural history. He discovered upwards of 100 new species of birds, and by his indomitable courage and perseverance many remarkable mammalia, reptiles, and insects are known to science at the present time. As a botanist he also met with considerable success, sending home many interesting new species.

Mr. Whitehead's first important collecting trip was made to Corsica in November, 1882, where he had the good fortune to meet with a new species of nuthatch, and subsequently to obtain both its nest and eggs. Gifted with a remarkably keen eye and a quick ear constantly on the alert for any unknown bird-note, he soon detected the presence of this interesting stranger. Having once indulged his natural love of travel and exploration, Mr. Whitehead soon gave up all idea of going into business, and towards the end of 1883 landed at Singapore. He then crossed to North Borneo, where he found an endless wealth of new or little known animal life. In the forests, besides sambar deer, wild cattle, pig, and bears, numbers of beautiful birds were met with, including argus pheasants, tree partridges, various species of hornbills, kingfishers, bee-eaters, sunbirds, trogons, barbets, all birds of the brightest hue, on some of which Nature seems to have bestowed every colour she is possessed of. So abundant were the different kinds were the most interesting



MR. JOHN WHITEHEAD, AGE 32.

white, the white under surface is tawny narrowly barred with black, and the total length about 17 in.

In December, 1887, Mr. Whitehead returned to Kina Balu, and remained there until the following June. This last expedition was thoroughly successful, for he succeeded in reaching the highest altitudes, and made a splendid collection during one month spent at an elevation of 8,000 ft. The weather during the eight months actually spent on Kina Balu was extremely wet; sometimes it would rain for three days at a

parts chocolate brown, with a broad tawny-buff eyebrow stripe, and the under parts ashy brown.

In June of the same year (1887) he visited the island of Palawan, remaining there for four months. Mr. Whitehead had been advised by the Governor of Labuan not to visit this island, the Sulus, a tribe of cut-throats inhabiting the coast, having recently murdered an American trader and some Chinese settlers. His safety during his sojourn on this island was no doubt due to those natural qualifications of determination, tact, and forbearance which marked his successful dealings with the natives during all his expeditions. He was, however, unable to reach the highlands of Palawan, for the Dusun tribes inhabiting the interior refused to carry his baggage, and threatened to attack him if he again invaded their forests. The expedition, however, yielded many interesting novelties, one of the finest being a large wood-owl (*Syrnium Whiteheadi*, fig. 1). The general colour of this bird is chocolate brown above, beautifully marked and spotted with white spots being mostly arranged in pairs; the



WHITEHEAD'S WOOD-OWL.
(*Syrnium Whiteheadi*.)

woodpecker tribe that no less than thirteen collected on one river alone. But perhaps and beautiful of all were two rare species of pitta, or ground thrush (*Pitta baudi* and *P. ussheri*). One has the head bright silvery blue, bordered by a black band, the back vermillion, throat white, and breast dark blue with copper reflections; the second the head and throat black, the back purple and blue, and the breast crimson. The naturalist's delight when he met with such birds for the first time may be imagined. The pittas were Mr. Whitehead's favourite group of birds, and a monograph of the genus written by him appeared in the *Ibis*, 1893.

It was not till January, 1887, at the third attempt, that Mr. Whitehead at last succeeded in reaching the great mountain of Kina Balu, the natural history of which was quite unknown. The peak is 13,700 ft. high, but his collecting ground was the western spur up to an elevation of 5,000 ft. The ornithological novelties of this expedition were published by Dr. Sharpe in the *Ibis*, 1887, pp. 435-454. The finest of all Mr. Whitehead's discoveries in Borneo, a magnificent and very large new species of broadbill (*Calypomena Whiteheadi*, fig. 3), was made during the first visit to Kina Balu. Another very interesting little bird was a bush-wren (*Ornithocichla Whiteheadi*, fig. 2), most nearly allied to a species found in Timor. This bird has the upper



WHITEHEAD'S BROADBILL.
(*Calypomena Whiteheadi*.)

time, and the average was about six hours' rain per diem, generally from 1 p.m. till nightfall. Much precious time was thus lost, and it was not easy to dry the specimens collected; yet, in spite of these difficulties, all the collections arrived in England in the most perfect order; the skins of mammalia and birds could not have been more beautifully prepared had the collector been surrounded with every requisite and comfort. The perfection of Mr. Whitehead's collections filled all who saw them with astonishment. He proved that it was possible for a man working in high elevations with almost incessant rain, and with no shelter but a hut, to produce the best possible results, and in this respect alone his skill as a collector was quite unrivalled. One of the finest discoveries made during this second trip was the splendid trogon (*Harpactes Whiteheadi*, fig. 4). This bird has the crown brilliant scarlet, the upper parts bright cinnamon, the throat black, shading into pearl grey on the chest, and the rest of the under parts rose red. The mammalia met with on Kina Balu included six new species, one of the most attractive being a pigmy squirrel (*Scirrus Whiteheadi*) with long white ear-tufts. No less than fifty-four new species of birds were discovered



WHITEHEAD'S BUSH-WREN.
(*Ornithocichla Whiteheadi*.)

during this expedition, as well as many new reptiles, shells, beetles, and butterflies.

From 1893 till his death Mr. Whitehead did a great service to natural history. He spent all his active life as an explorer in the forests and on the mountains of the different islands of the Philippines, now known to us, by name at least, from the events of the war, but then seldom visited by Englishmen other than those engaged in the hemp or tobacco trade. Of the birds and beasts of these islands we knew almost nothing. It was credibly reported that there were no beast of any interest or peculiar to the islands. Mr. Whitehead discovered that they owned a new and most interesting set of animals all to themselves. They inhabited a high plateau on the island of Luzon, 8,000ft. above the sea.

It is not often that an explorer has the fortune to discover the whereabouts of two kinds of birds of whose existence all naturalists knew, but of whose habitats everyone was ignorant. In the museums of Paris and Darmstadt were the skins of two brilliantly-coloured birds, one a kind of fruit pigeon, the other a ground thrush (*Pitta Kochi*, fig. 5). No one knew where these birds came from until Mr. Whitehead solved the mystery. Both kinds were found on this "delectable mountain," and their skins sent to the British Museum in London.

One of his later collections was destroyed by fire on its way home from Luzon. Unlike Sir Stamford Raffles, who lost the collections of a life time in the burning of the *Fame*, he was able to return and replace them, and this led to his most interesting discovery on the islands of the great forest eagle of Samar (fig. 6). The appearance of this, the most remarkable bird of prey discovered during this century, may be gathered from the illustration.

Its size is very great—from 16lb. to 20lb., according to the discoverer's estimate. Its beak is also unlike that of other eagles, very deep and very narrow, part of a most formidable equipment for attack. It is said to live mainly on monkeys, which it catches in the trees. The monkeys must feel nervous when this eagle is about.

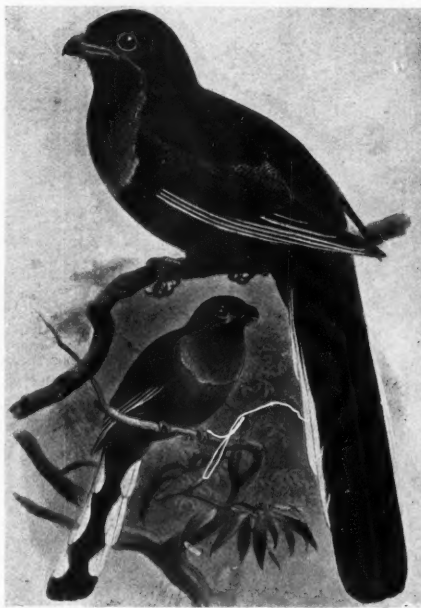
The splendid collection of mammals formed during this exploration of the Philippines has been described and figured by Mr. Oldfield Thomas in the Transactions of the Zoological Society of London, while the great bird collections, including no less than forty-eight species new to science, are fully reported on by the writer in the numbers of the *Ibis* between July, 1894, and January, 1897.

When in 1899 Mr. Whitehead returned to the Philippines collecting was found to be out of the question. He therefore made his way to the island of Hainan, off the South-East Coast of China, hoping to discover fresh birds and beasts in the so-called Five-finger Mountains, in the interior of this island.

But he had scarcely reached them ere malignant fever cut short his eventful career, and deprived this country of one whose fame as a field naturalist and highland explorer will long remain unrivalled and unforgettable.

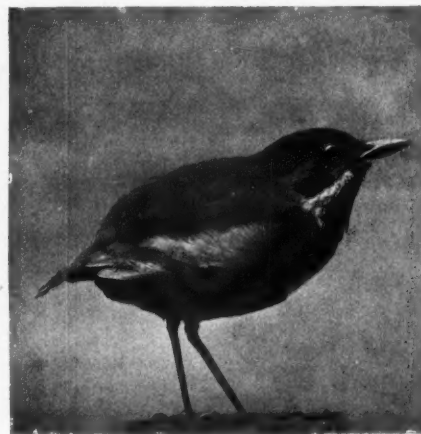
It had always been Mr. Whitehead's desire that when the end came he should die surrounded by the wild animals and birds he loved, and his wish has been gratified.

W. R. OGILVIE-GRANT.



WHITEHEAD'S TROGON.

(*Harpactes Whiteheadi*.)



KOCH'S PITTA.

(*Pitta Kochi*.)



WHITEHEAD'S FOREST EAGLE.

(*Pitheophaga Jefferyi*.)

Recollections of Steeplechasing.—VII.

REFERRING, for one moment, to the old Croydon Steeplechase Meetings, of which I had something to say in my last article, these were inaugurated, I think, in the year 1866. At any rate, whenever it was, I remember that London was "billed" with posters bearing the following words: "Go and see the Sensational Water-jump at Croydon." As a matter of fact, there was nothing either sensational or dangerous about it, as it was merely a dug out "splash," some two feet deep, with an ordinary-sized artificial fence in front of it. As bad luck would have it, however, Voightlander fell and broke his back in jumping it, and his rider, Mr. Crawshaw, was promptly proceeded against by that well-meaning but somewhat foolish body, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, although it was in no form or shape his fault, nor was the fence in any way a dangerous one.

The same sort of thing happened some twelve years afterwards at Sandown Park, where the water-jump was certainly not too big. I forget what race it was in—I think a Selling Steeplechase—but a horse ridden by that well-known Irish amateur, Mr. Greville Nugent—"The Limb," as he was commonly called—fell at the water, and his rider, being

unfortunately struck on the head by one of the horses behind, which galloped over him, as he lay on the ground, was so severely injured that he died next day. Poor little "Limb," he was a cheery companion and a fine horseman, but one of the unluckiest mortals that donned the Queen's uniform or was put up into a racing saddle. He began his career of ill-fortune as a subaltern in the Guards, from which he soon had to retire, in consequence of some dispute with a senior officer, in which, I was told, at the time, by those behind the scenes, that he was not the one to blame. He next essayed politics, being returned for some Irish constituency, but here again fortune was adverse, and he was unseated for bribery, of which he himself probably knew nothing. His next venture, in the uncertain sea of matrimony, was equally disastrous; and when he fell back on his favourite amusement, between the flags, it ended as I have just described.

Again was there an outcry about the dangers of steeplechasing, and of this one fence in particular, although it was not a bit too big, and the same accident might have happened at an ordinary flight of hurdles. The consequence, however, was the death of a promising young chaser at the very next meeting. In consequence of the nonsense written in many of the papers about the above accident, the Sandown Park executive were compelled to let off some of the water in the artificial trench that does duty as a brook, and so make it appear narrower. About two feet of ground on the landing side of this fence, therefore, which had originally been under water, was now rotten, and any horse just clearing the water and landing with his hind legs in this false ground, naturally made holes in it. It was whilst running for the Grand Military Gold Cup, won by Chilblain, that Moatlands, a very high-class young horse, who was going exceedingly well at the time, landed with his near hind foot in one of these holes, and broke his leg. He was at once shot, and it was a bit of real bad luck for his owner, who had shortly before refused a big price for him.

But to return to Croydon, the race in which Voightlander met his end, was won by Mr. T. V. Morgan's "pocket" steeplechaser Globule, a marvellous little horse, who, ridden by George Holman, beat Astrolabe and seventeen others, after making every yard of the running. The Holmans were a power in the riding

world at that time, and the same member of that well-known family shortly afterwards won the two principal events of the Woodside meeting on that great chaser, The Doctor, who ran The Colonel to a neck in the Grand National of 1870. He also won the big Croydon Steeplechase on Mr. T. V. Morgan's The Brick.

I do not think that George Holman ever won the "Liverpool," but he was very nearly doing so in 1873, on Master Mowbray, who finished fourth to Disturbance, Ryshworth, and Columbine. This very good horse, who belonged to Mr. J. Goodliff, had, in the preceding November, made a bold bid for victory in the Great Metropolitan Steeplechase at Croydon.

George Holman having broken a collar-bone whilst riding Mr. T. V. Morgan's Thalassius in the Stewards' Steeplechase the day before, his brother Alfred had the mount. He was meeting that great horse Disturbance at 3lb., however, and his rider eased him when he saw what a lot Captain Machell's horse had in hand, or he would probably have finished second instead of third.

That Holman's judgment was correct was shown when Disturbance gave Master Mowbray 18lb. instead of 3lb., and beat him again, at Aintree, four months afterwards. It is more than likely that Disturbance was the best horse that ever won a Grand National at any rate Captain Machell always declares that he was the best chaser he ever had, and some real clinkers have been through his hands. He carried 11st. 11lb. in his Grand National, and beat such good horses as Ryshworth, Revirescat, Footman, Red Nob, Casse Tete, Curragh Ranger, Reugny, Huntsman, Congress, Cinderella, Cecil, Master Mowbray, and fifteen others. Master Mowbray, who finished fourth, ridden by George Holman, was a grand performer over big countries, and he afterwards showed himself to be one of the best chasers in training, by giving 11lb. to that great horse Congress, and beating him by a neck, in the Grand Annual Steeplechase at Cheltenham, in 1875. He was ridden by George Holman in that race, in which brother Alfred had a terrible fall on Mistletoe, and was carried into the stand for dead, but fortunately got over it all right, and is still living, fit and well, at Cheltenham, with which town his family have been closely associated for many years. Furley, ridden by "Dick" Marsh, Harbinger, by poor Jewitt, and Mistletoe, all fell together at the hurdles below the stand, and it was a wonder that more harm was not done.

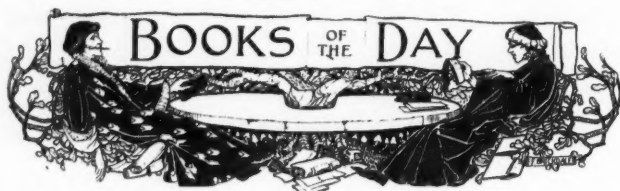
As I have just remarked, the Holmans took a very leading part in the Cheltenham meetings, which in the early seventies, were amongst the most important in the kingdom, and another brother was J. Holman, who won two races there in 1871. In 1875 his brother George won the Grand Annual Steeplechase on Master Mowbray, beating thirteen good-class chasers, and in the following year the same race fell to Captain Thorold's good horse Merlin, by Gunboat, ridden by J. Jones; whilst another useful chaser, Mr. Leigh's Mustapha, by Bon Vivant, and ridden by Mr. Crawshaw, took the Prince of Wales's Steeplechase, large fields of good horses going to the post for both races.

It is a pity that we do not see sport like this at Cheltenham—or anywhere else—in these days, but those were the palmy days of steeplechasing, from 1870 to 1876, and Cheltenham was going very strong just then, while such horses do not exist now as were Congress, Master Mowbray, The Colonel, The Brick, Clonave, Defence, The Lamb, Harvester, Scarrington, and many others I could mention, nor are there many cross-country horsemen to be compared to the Holmans, Mr. Tom Pickernell ("Mr. Thomas"), Mr. "Jack" Goodwin, J. Page, Mr. E. P. Wilson, Bob l'Anson, Mr. Arthur Yates, Mr. Crawshaw, "Jimmy" Adams, and Mr. J. M. Richardson.

I had meant to say something in this article about the military steeplechasing of this period, but these recollections

of old days at Croydon, Liverpool, and Cheltenham have appropriated all the space at my disposal, and I must hold over my recollections of the soldiers and their horses until next week.

OUTPOST.



THERE are a good many distinct and intelligible views concerning what is called "The Celtic Revival." First comes the view of the average Saxon critic, who finds in Celtic literature touches of a genius which he may not perhaps entirely understand. Perceiving them, he either approves or disapproves. To the purely Celtic enthusiast, who is always abundantly satisfied with the performances of his brethren, it really matters very little what the cold-blooded Saxon may think. Of the Saxon in commendation he complains that he is frigid; to the Saxon finding fault he imputes stupidity and incapacity to appreciate; for him it suffices that a book should be written by Irishman, Scot, or Welshman; that fact alone is a proof of its genius, and, if any man cannot see the genius as it flashes, so much the worse for him. There is a third view, that of the Celt who is not entirely Celtic. That is undoubtedly right, for it is my own. I am a Celt, with modifications. When I read the boasts of the Celt concerning the racial genius I am tempted to exaggerate the modifications, because we Celts are much too prone to treat

our geese as swans, and even to treat our vices as virtues. When, on the other hand, a purely Celtic work wins the approval of a sober-minded Englishman, a new temptation comes in the form of a desire to feel Celtic and to minimise the modifications. This earnest remonstrance—for it is all that—is the fruit of reading "Gilian the Dreamer," by Neil Munro (Isbister). The Celtic part of me rises in revolt against this book, on the ground that it, to use a colloquial expression, "gives away the whole show," and it is not in the least consoling that the surrender has the appearance of fidelity to Nature and to racial character. On the other hand, the rest of me, the part that is not Celtic but merely English, is compelled to recognise high artistic quality in the production.

Gilian is a little Highland boy, cursed or blessed, you may call it which you will, with the poetic temperament. Analyse him coldly, and you find him a mass of self-deceiving make-believe, a liar because he is a coward, a vacillating fool possessed of much cleverness, melancholy, hopelessly impractical, a creature living in day dreams of his own prowess, and in daily life absolutely contemptible. We meet him first as he descends from the upland sheep farm of Ladyfield to announce to Paymaster John Campbell, who owns the farm, that its occupant, the boy's grandmother and only friend in the world, and Campbell's kinswoman, is dead. So absorbed is Gilian in considering how he

may impart the news in the most sensational and dramatic manner that he quite forgets to grieve. Arrived at the seaport village at the mouth of the glen, he is adopted by Paymaster John, who takes him to live with him, and with dear old Miss Mary, his sister, and with his brothers, the Cornal and the palsied General, who fight the battles of the Peninsula and of the last Napoleonic campaign over and over again. All this part of the book is exceedingly clever, especially in its quiet delineation of the old "Hielan" touchiness and pride. But we must stick, more or less closely, to Gilian. As Nan, the girl friend of his childhood, and the daughter of his guardian's enemy, tells him constantly, he is always play-acting and deceiving himself, and, when it comes to a pinch, he never fails to lie out of sheer pusillanimity. His schoolfellows find him reading a novel hired from the postmistress for a penny—an absurd thing to do. Promptly he tears out pages and makes them into little paper boats, by way of putting them off the scent. There is an announcement that the county regiment is to visit the town; the old soldiers are one blaze of martial reminiscence, and the fever catches Gilian. Here comes the finest of many fine passages in the book:

"He woke in the dark. The house was still. A rumour of the sea came up to his window, and a faint wind sighed in the garden. Suddenly, as he lay guessing at the hour and tossing, there sounded something far off and unusual that must have wakened half the sleeping town. The boy sat up and listened, with breath caught, and straining ears. No, no, it was nothing; the breeze had gone round; the night was wholly still; what he had heard was but in the fringes of his dream. But stay! there it was again, the throb of a drum far off in the night. It faded again in veering currents of the wind, then woke more robust and unmistakable. The drums! the drums! the drums! The rumour of the sea was lost, no more the wind sighed in the pears, all the voices of Nature were dumb to that throb of war. It came nearer and nearer, and still the boy was all in darkness, in a house betraying no other waking than his own, quivering to an emotion the most passionate of his life. For with the call of the approaching drums there entered to him all the sentiment of the family of that house, the sentiment of the soldier, the full proclamation of his connection with a thousand years of warrior clans.



BLOOD-BREASTED FLOWER-PECKER.

(*Dicaeum hematostictum*.)

"The drums! the drums! the drums! Up he got and dressed, and silently down the stairs, and through a sleeping household to the street. He of all that dwelling had heard the drums that to ancient soldiers surely should have been more startling; but the town was in a tumult ere he reached the Cross. The windows flared up in the topmost of the tall lands, and the doors stood open to the street, while men and women swept along the causeway. The drums! the drums! the drums! Oh! the terror and the joy of them, the wonder, the alarm, the sweet wild thrill of them for Gilian, as he ran, bare-legged, bare-headed, to the factor's corner, there to stand awaiting the troops now marching on the highway through the wood! There was but a star or two of light in all the grudging sky, and the sea, a beast of blackness, growled and crunched upon the shore. The drums! the drums! the drums! Fronting that monotonous but pregnant music by the drummers of the regiment still unseen, the people of the burgh waited, whispering, afraid, like the paymaster's boy, to shatter the charm of that delightful terror. Then of a sudden the town roared and shook to a twofold rattle of the skins and the shrill of fifes, as the corps from the north, forced by their jocular colonel to a night march, swept through the arches and wheeled upon the grassy esplanade. Was it a trick of the soldier, who in youth had danced in the ken in Madrid, that he should thus startle the hosts of his regiment, and that passing through the town he should for a little make his men more like ghosts, saying no word to any one of the aghast natives, but moving mechanically in the darkness to the rattle of the drums? The drums! the drums! the drums! Gilian stood entranced as they passed, looming large and innumerable in the darkness, unchallenged and uncheered by the bewildered citizens. It was the very entrance he could have chosen. For now they were ghosts, legions of the air in borrowed boots, of the earth, shades of some army cut down in swaths, and fitted in the fashion of the Cornal's bloodiest stories. And now they were the foreign invader, dumb because they did not know the native language, pitying this doomed community, but moving in to strike it at the vitals."

After it Gilian does all sorts of things, struts after the soldiery, carries a switch as a musket, and so forth, but he sees the laughing face of Nan in the middle, and thinks better of soldiering, or worse. In fact, to the very end poor Gilian is a failure. At a time of storm and stress he cannot make up his mind to rescue Nan from drowning, and young Islay, the factor's son, does it instead. But Gilian gives an account of the adventure, in which he appears as the hero. When Gilian elopes with Nan, again, he does it in the silliest way, is frightened of the consequences of his own action, doesn't know how to make love, and relies upon his day dreams to provide him and her with the necessities of life. Finally, young Islay secures her, and the story ends. It is a clever story, and brilliantly written, and it is true in an exaggerated way to the Celtic nature, but surely it is hard on that nature and on that genius that one of its exponents should have written "Gilian the Dreamer."

Mrs. Sarah Tytler has shown more than once that she can write with pathos, and even with poignancy, and in "A Crazy Moment" (Digby, Long) she shows all, or nearly all, her old skill. Its defects come early, and they consist mainly in the improbability, and even the impossibility, of the fraud which is the proof of the plot. According to the story, Lily Ashe, the wife of a Naval officer serving abroad, and living with her mother-in-law, the wife of a country squire, was told by the country doctor that she was to become a mother. She went to see a specialist in London, who told her otherwise. Then she stole the baby of a working woman in a third-class waiting room, escaped to the seaside, returned to the country, and passed the child off as her own. After about twenty years she was found out, and there was trouble. The last sentence alone is credible, but putting aside this preliminary difficulty the story is well told and well worked out.

Severity is not the dominant note of the reviews in COUNTRY LIFE, but it is sometimes used when a novelist is pretentious. That is the case in "Lucas Cleeve's" "What a Woman Will Do" (F. V. White). To start with, "Lucas Cleeve" labels her book a "Society Drama," and she starts badly by making the villain, an aristocratic young man who has married recklessly, dine frequently, as a guest, at the Carlton, which is impossible, as Euclid says, and also absurd. Society is fair game enough for satire, but satire, if it is to bite, should be more or less accurate in its surroundings, so as to have an air of *vraisemblance*. This is not the case with "Lucas Cleeve's" satire. Primrose, daughter of Lady Peggy Vibart and Mr. Lorillard, marries Devereux Venables, who is in the hands of the Jews, and renders himself liable to be prosecuted for what "Lucas Cleeve," goodness knows why, calls crim. There is Clarissa, a great heiress, who loves him. He and Primrose, with the help of a high-minded friend, Chauncey, prepare the materials for a bogus divorce case, and then he marries Clarissa. Clarissa, with not unnatural reluctance, makes a handsome allowance to Primrose and the children, and Primrose is very much hurt because she is not received in country society afterwards. There is a lot more, but that is as far as I have the patience to follow the story, and it is followed thus far only by way of warning.

From this kind of thing it is a real relief to turn to "Trespasers Who Were Prosecuted," by Sadi Grant (Digby, Long). There is, perhaps, no great substance in the main story, which is simply that of a bright English girl, who desired, in the most innocent way in the world, to see the inside of the palace of a Malay Sultan, who had been at Eton and at an English university during his absence on a shooting expedition. This she contrived to accomplish by changing places with Sunta, the Sultan's favourite wife. Sunta, however, never came back, and when the Sultan returned there was naturally some little disturbance. Under stress, however, of the presence of Lord William, the cousin of the adventurous Lady Alice, the Sultan behaved like a gentleman in all respects save one—that is to say, he sent his head hunters to find Sunta and her lover, and to kill them, and they did. Even that was right according to the code of the South Pacific, and this reminds me that I am not sure that the author is quite sound in geography. But, after all, what does that matter? The tale is told cleverly and brightly.

IN THE GARDEN.

ALPINE AND HAUTBOIS STRAWBERRIES.

THIS section has gained much attention of late years, not a surprising fact to record when one knows that even in autumn ripe fruit of pleasantly acid flavour may be enjoyed. A variety called St. Joseph is of great value, and fruits, indeed, from any of the Quatre Saisons group may be obtained well into October. These kinds are easily obtained from either seeds or layers. The Alpine Strawberries are very distinct from the ordinary fruits of the garden; the President, Sir Joseph Paxton, and Latest of All are, perhaps, of slight market value; but private growers relish the piquant little fruits, far richer in flavour than many of the larger ones.

RAISING ALPINE STRAWBERRIES FROM SEED.

This is, without doubt, the most satisfactory way of raising the Alpine Strawberries, and seeds sown under glass in March will give plants in fruit the following June, which provide a supply for some months. Whilst fruits are being produced, runners are appearing also, hence the succession is maintained by flowers forming upon runners made throughout the summer. Sow the seed in boxes or pans under glass, and the seedlings must be pricked off when of sufficient size to handle into cold frames, from whence transfer them to beds. Put the Strawberries from 12 in. to 15 in. apart. There is another way, and, of course, the only one where no opportunities exist for raising the plants under glass, and that is to sow in the month of May out of doors in light and rich soil, planting out the seedlings into their permanent quarters in the following August. These plants will not, of course, fruit until the year afterwards; and another plan may yet be mentioned, namely, to sow the seed in the autumn. Prick out the seedlings under glass in boxes for the winter, and plant in the following spring in the positions in which they are to produce fruit.

A practice with a well-known fruit grower is to get runners from plants in May and put them out in rich soil to produce fruit during the autumn. The plants maintain, practically, a perpetual supply of fruit on the new growths; indeed, such varieties as St. Joseph may be termed "perpetual," as the fruits appear for many months. The parent stock will fruit in June, and a succession obtained from the new growths far into the autumn, whilst a later picking may be secured from a cold frame.

FURTHER NOTES.

This small-fruited section of Strawberries requires a lighter soil than that needful for the more familiar varieties in gardens. By "lighter," however, we do not mean poorer, as the soil should be liberally manured. Make fresh beds every year, destroying the old ones, whether the plants are seedlings or obtained from layers. Only in this way is an abundant produce obtained. Of varieties, one of the best known is the St. Joseph, which has been exhibited on many occasions at the meetings of the Royal Horticultural Society. A variety called St. Antoine de Padona is likely to become popular when better known, as it bears larger fruit without loss of flavour. A delicious Alpine Strawberry is known as the Gunnersbury Alpine, and fruits abundantly. Then one may mention, also, the better-known red and white Alpines, and Louis Gautier is grown in some gardens, but we do not care for its poor colour.

NUT CULTURE IN ENGLISH GARDENS—MORE NOTES.

We have lately written of the importance of Nut and Filbert culture in English gardens, and in Mr. Bunyard's fourth edition of "Fruit Farming for Profit," which has just come to hand, some interesting particulars are given about the pruning of the trees, which is an important consideration. As fruit trees of all kinds are being planted and pruned now, the following remarks will be interesting: "When received from the growers, Cob trees have a small head upon a stem of 12 in. to 15 in.; this stem is intentional, so that the ground beneath the bush may be the more readily kept free from weeds and be dug. They are planted as received, and allowed to grow for one year, when they should be cut hard in, to make them throw out vigorous shoots from the base of the head, to form the future tree; this is done by annually cutting, so that the next terminal shoot is made from an under bud, which, in course of time, makes a tree formed like a washing basin. I note the best shaped trees have started with six, to be doubled to twelve main branches. From these a set of spurs or shoots are given off, on which the nuts are produced, and the trees should be so managed that at the end of 100 years old they should be 15 ft. or 20 ft. across the top, but not higher than 5 ft. from the ground. From the central portion of the main boughs a number of strong yearling shoots will be given off, which in Kent are called wands. These are taken out in summer, or partially so, for packing the autumn fruit, and in winter the rest are broken out, and either sold for flower sticks or basket making, or reserved to pack soft fruit the next season. The male or catkin blossoms are produced in February and March, most freely at the upper part of the trees, and should be allowed to remain long enough to fertilise the pistillate, or female flowers, which are produced on the smaller boughs. Should the weather be very still and warm it would pay to tap the boughs with a stick, to make this pollen fly. When winter pruning, the spurs are thinned, and if need be stopped; old wood is removed and the stronger growths shortened and thinned, leaving the trees regularly balanced on all sides, and with free play for the air and sun among the branches, remembering that the foliage is large on pruned trees. . . . Suckers from the roots should be hoed off in growth, or in winter be severed with a sharp spade, and if well rooted some may be reserved to make future plants. . . . Some fine Nuts are produced on trees 10 ft. to 12 ft. high, which have their spurs shortened in the same way as Espalier Apples, gaining a few inches yearly at the top. It is worth consideration whether existing copes and covers could not advantageously be planted with these Nuts. The trees overhead need not be removed, as in Kent Apples, Pears, and Plums frequently form a dense cover over Cob Nuts, and yet they produce, but naturally not so freely as those in more open quarters."

CALCEOLARIA BURBIDGEI.

This hybrid Calceolaria has been many times noted in various horticultural publications, and to those whose ideal Calceolaria produces a large mass of showy blossoms, on plants little more than a foot high, this will not have much to commend it; but, as a pretty flowering plant for the greenhouse throughout the winter, it should have extended cultivation, for, despite its good qualities and simple requirements, it is difficult to obtain from nurserymen. Treated as a pillar plant, this Calceolaria will reach a height of 10 ft. to 12 ft., and in this way its large loose panicles of clear yellow blossoms are very showy, or it may be grown in bush form, with two or three stakes to secure the principal shoots. This is better than trying it in a hard and formal shape. This hybrid was raised twenty years ago in the College Botanic Gardens, Dublin. The parent plants were *C. deflexa*, at that time much grown under the name of *C. fuchsiae-folia*, though it appears now to have almost dropped out of cultivation, and *C. Pavoni*, a strong-growing species of no particular merit, this latter supplying the pollen. The hybrid is an improvement on both, being of easier culture than *C. deflexa*, and, as a garden plant, superior to *C. Pavoni*.

CATALOGUES RECEIVED.—Kerr Bros., 36, High Street, Dumfries, select seeds, Carnations, Violas, etc.—J. T. Gilbert, Anemone Nurseries, Dyke Bourne, seeds.—Dickson's, Chester, select flower and vegetable seeds.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.—We are always pleased to assist readers in difficulties concerning their gardens. We are also in touch with many first-class gardeners, and shall be happy to recommend one to any who may require the services of a reliable man.

COVERT SHOOTING AT NUNEHAM.

THERE is not a more typical bit of old England left in the home counties than Nuneham Park. Generations of Oxford men and thousands of boating parties have admired the stately home of the Harcourts on the steep hill sweeping up from the river, and have rejoiced with exceeding joy at its streamside beauties, as they glided down the Isis to the lock. But our present business is not with the Nuneham river, nor with the house and temples and gardens of Simon Earl Harcourt and the Prince Archbishop of York, but with the broad acres of Nuneham Park when the coverts were shot and the winter silence of the woods was broken for four days by the crack of the breech-loaders and the rattle of the beaters' sticks. But first let us take a

stroll over the park itself, on a late autumn day, and see how the woods lie and the promise of sport a month before the shooting.

South of the park, Clifton Hampden way, runs the old green road called Thame Lane, almost blocked by hanging trees, the way by which pack-horses and carts went from Thame to Abingdon. No one ever uses it, but there it is, as it was in the days of the Plantagenets. Across this lane by a ladder stile, over park, over pale, runs a path under most ancient and venerable oaks, with the rabbit-cropped turf below them studded with acorns and acorn cups—



W. A. Rouch.

BURST OF PHEASANTS ACROSS THE PARK.

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grand old trees, gnarled and pollarded, splendid in their naked strength when the leaves which were on them lie in brown carpets at their feet. On the left

is the venison house, round the palings of which hang the heads of fat bucks, and on the right the glades of the Black Wood, in whose warm undergrowth of fern more woodcock lie than in any of the 600 and odd acres of covert which surround the deer park on the north. Beyond this again is the pinetum, where the shooting begins on the first day. Beyond, over the flats, and on the edge of the steep slopes that fall to the Thames,



W. A. Rouch.

MR. HARCOURT STANDING BACK.

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W. A. Rouch.

BEATERS CROSSING THE BRIDGE.

Copyright—"C.L."

stands the house; and away to the left are more coverts, the "Gorse" among them, while beyond by the river, and fringing it on a tall steep brow, is the famous Lock Wood, and the island where pheasants and wild duck alike haunt the sedges and tangled covert in the centre of the Thames. A month before the scenes here depicted by Mr. Rouch's skill, the promise of sport at Nuneham was enough to satisfy the most eager shot, while the setting and surroundings were even more than commonly beautiful. Films of mist were hanging like gigantic cobwebs across the park, and light steam rising from the ground and rolling across the ridges as the sun warmed the upper air and sucked them upwards. The deer, that fine herd which the Prince Archbishop of York in his will begged that his descendants would ever

maintain at the same number which he bequeathed them, the bucks with their throats swelled with the pride of the season of love, were lying scattered over the wet and steaming grass. Endless lines of rooks and jacks were streaming out to the valley below, plunging downwards into the lake of mist. Cock pheasants were running out from the coverts, or crowing as they flew down the rides, and a covey of park partridges, the most obstinately pedestrian of all birds, were racing over the turf. By the gate of the Lock Wood, under a tall oak, two bucks were engaged in sullen combat, clashing their horns, muzzle to earth, and point to point, in an obstinate fencing bout. At the back of the park, as the sun became stronger and its warmth was felt, pheasants and rabbits swarmed out to bask and feed. Old cock pheasants strutted on the turf or chased younger birds away round the oak trunks; mild-mannered hen pheasants basked on the warm banks or flew up on to the split oak palings to sun themselves; and the skirmishers of the main body of rabbits, emboldened by warmth and quiet, ventured a hundred yards from the edge of the big wood into the open park itself.

A few weeks later promise became performance, and the Nuneham Woods were shot for four days in succession. If there are prettier coverts any-

where else, more strikingly placed, or better calculated to show sport, we hope some reader will kindly send us photographs of them. The beautiful setting and surroundings of the Nuneham shooting, taken by Mr. Rouch's camera in most unfavourable weather, give, perhaps, a better idea of the scene than any words of ours. But as Nuneham Woods are particularly good examples of "estate forestry," and lie in large masses, the plan here given, and some account of the way in which they are beaten, may be of service to those who are fortunate enough to have coverts of similar character elsewhere.

The main covert at Nuneham is a very extensive mass of wood known as the Black Wood. It runs completely round a large island of open arable ground, and almost encloses two inlets from the park. To the north-east it is joined by another mass of wood running down from the pinetum, part of which forms a promontory at Palmer's Leys, from which the main flush of the first morning's shoot is had. The birds cross the park to the Black Wood and give fine high shots. Here the guns are placed at about 80 yds. from the wood fence, and here ought to have been the best shooting of the day. But things were not destined to go as they were intended. As the guns were walking to position, the pheasants were seen streaming out anyhow. Those who could advanced at the



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THE HOUSE PARTY.

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A CORNER OF THE BLACK WOOD.

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BEATERS IN SMOCKS.

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W. A. Rouch.

COUNTING THE BAG BEFORE LUNCHEON.

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double. All this time the pheasants were moving, and an ominous sound was heard from the covert as of a small dog yapping. Whatever it was, it flushed the birds effectually, but not always in the direction most desired. When the beaters got to work and drove the covert out, the culprit was found to be a fine dog fox, which broke cover. He had been amusing himself by hunting up the pheasants, and so enjoyed himself that, so far as a fox can, he gave tongue. After luncheon, the outlying part of the Black Wood was driven, the bag being eminently satisfactory, in spite of the fox's interference in the morning. Here endeth the first day! The second and third days were devoted to the beautiful and "sporting" beats of the remainder of the Black Wood, the Lock Wood, and the island by the river. The former usually holds a good many woodcock, while the wild duck, attracted by Mr. Harcourt's tame birds, rise with the pheasants from the island.

This year the shoot took place before the first frost, and no cock and only one wild duck were shot. But the pheasants made up for them. The Black Wood is attacked at the gate marked X, and driven to the corner B, whence the birds stream across to the point C, opposite. Here much of the shooting is over the oaks in the open park,

as shown in our illustrations. Excellent sport was had both at the first corner and later at the opposite point S. Here the birds come out high over and through the rugged and gnarled old oaks of the park, and need straight powder and plenty of stopping. In the afternoon the wood was beaten over again, with the drives reversed, and the day closed with a bag of over 600 head, including 400 pheasants.

But the most characteristic and beautiful day at Nuneham is that which sees the beating of the Lock Wood. How many thousands of old Oxford men and young Oxford men must have pleasant memories of the row beneath Nuneham Woods and of the lovely little cottages by what was once the lock, but is now, and has for years been, merely a part of the river frontage of the Nuneham estate. The Harcourt family have always extended a special courtesy to the University and its members in matters relating to the enjoyment of the beauties of Nuneham, and the present owner of this ancient home and distinguished line will maintain the tradition of his ancestors in their acts of courtesy.

The third day's shooting is usually devoted to this part of the woods, the island being beaten before luncheon. The beaters, who are shown returning over the bridge like a procession of white friars in our



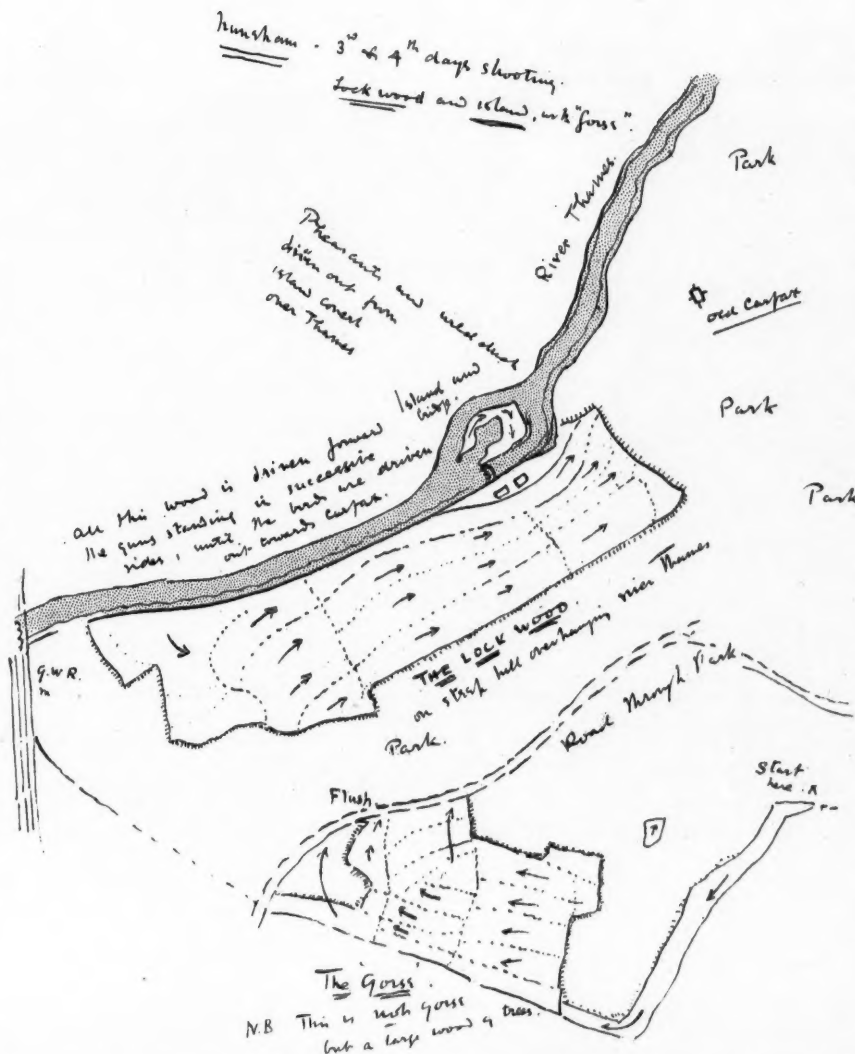
illustration, are taken out in boats and landed on one arm of the curious horseshoe-shaped islet. They wind round the island, and drive the birds over the guns, who stand along the river bank by the lock cottages and on the meadow beyond. On this occasion many clusters of red berries and masses of "old man's beard" still hung on the trees and shrubs of the island, though all the leaves had fallen. The pheasants rose high over river and trees alike, making for the ridge behind. A few, which preferred Radley to Nuneham, broke out at the back, and were shot crossing the meadows. Usually a number of wild duck are killed here, as these join the tamed wild duck now kept on the river. Owing to the extreme mildness of the weather few ducks had arrived, and only one was shot among the pheasants; but later in the month, in a drive of cock pheasants and duck from the island, no less than fifteen of the latter were shot. The weather was dull and gloomy, but few signs of this appear in our illustrations. Most of them tell their own story, and the striking variety of scenery is sufficiently obvious. What, for instance, could be more beautiful of their kind or more utterly unlike than the BURST OF PHEASANTS ACROSS THE PARK and the BEATERS CROSSING THE BRIDGE? Mr. Harcourt is seen standing back, among his oaks, and making the centre of the group at the summer-house. The "burst of pheasants," as we look at the photograph with a hand magnifying glass, shows three birds crossing behind the trees, and the feathers of a fourth floating in the air above the large oak, the bird having dropped to the shot which Mr. Arthur Somerset, the gun, has just fired.

C. J. CORNISH.

PLOVER SHOOTING.

PERHAPS there is no sport so thoroughly calling for the qualities of a keen sportsman as the above, and it is the want of these that acts so disastrously on the gunner's bag. There is no setting of traps for them, none of the nursing which is so much in vogue in the pheasant and partridge shooting of to-day. No dogs or beaters are of the slightest use; no cosy corners are to be obtained even by the man with the biggest cheque in his hand. The birds are wild, and to overmatch them, the hunter must call to his aid similar qualities—stoicism and unlimited patience.

The plover, however, is cursed with an overpowering curiosity, and it is only by taking advantage of this that he can eventually be brought to bag. Anything strange is a matter calling for the gravest investigation until it is perfectly understood. The bird must be thoroughly at home with everything, every rock and bush and tree—I had almost said stone—and, until that desirable state is reached, there is no peace for him. Then let the sportsman go out and supply that disturbing factor. Prominence is a



great point, and, after that, to make oneself as little like a human being as is convenient. There is, however, a third, greater still, the neglect of which has often sent the hunter home as empty as he started, and that is to stand motionless. Stillness, as we humans reckon it, is worse than useless. It must be absolute immobility, or else I would back a man with a stick to obtain as good a result as he with a gun.

Having sighted the birds, you go to their feeding grounds and there take your stand. Having done this, let all the ills that the world contains afflict you before you move from it, and in due time you will have your reward. Do not trouble to approach them; they can see as far as you, and farther, and will take very good care to keep out of your way. Their respect for man carries far beyond the range of your piece; but when they see you turned suddenly into something very much resembling a post, there is evidently something to be learnt and understood to hand down to future generations. At the time of this transformation they may be two or even three miles off, but that to them is no more than so many yards would be to us. In a very few minutes they will be wheeling up and down, nearer and nearer, extending their flight to the radius of a mile or more.

And now is perhaps the most trying time for the novice. They seem so

near that they must to a certainty discover the cheat, and be away. A little self-restraint, however, will show them wheeling ever nearer, and at every return presenting a surer mark. Let them approach within at least 20 yds. before firing, and then—and here is another pitfall into which those who should certainly know better sometimes fall—if you have any regard for your aching muscles and waning patience, do not fire at them point blank, or you may if you are lucky have the satisfaction of knocking the tail feathers out of the last bird as he swoops by you, for shot, in spite of what covert shooters say, is very slow-travelling stuff. To obtain any result you must fire at least 5 yds., and sometimes as much as 7 yds., in front of the birds, though the proper distance in individual cases will only come with practice. Do not be content with discharging one barrel only, but blaze away with both at the same time, for be very sure that you will not get another chance.

One more word of warning to the novice to prevent disappointment. The result of his discharge will most certainly startle him, and he will imagine that he has killed the whole flock until he sees the apparently lifeless birds rising one after another from the ground, to which all have fallen, and going off to rejoin one another far out of range.

And now for a few explanatory remarks on the habits of the birds. During the summer months they are at their northern breeding grounds, from which the young birds are sent in the early autumn. Both before and after this, however, there is a constant dribble going on, mainly of unattached cocks and hens; but it is not until the first frosts, or, failing these, the first rough weather, that the old birds consent to leave their haunts. Starting on their long journey as fat as butter, they remain on the wing for three or four days at a time, covering incredible distances. On this journey the South Coast of England is an important resting-place, and here in late October or early November they halt, tired and worn out, to recuperate.

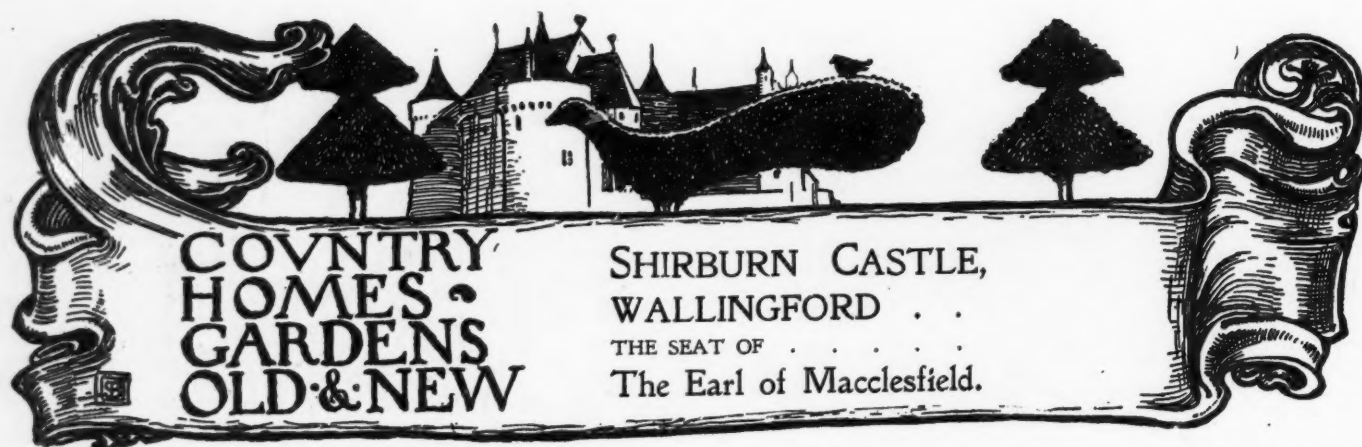
Taken all round, plover shooting will never become popular, for, putting aside the shortness of the season in which it can be indulged, it asks too much and gives too little to please those whose sporting instincts have been nourished up on half-tame pheasants and partridges.



W. A. Rouch.

NUNEHAM: A CLEAN SHOT.

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**COUNTRY
HOMES
GARDENS
OLD & NEW**

**SHIRBURN CASTLE,
WALLINGFORD . .**

THE SEAT OF . . .
The Earl of Macclesfield.

ABOUT seventeen miles from Oxford, close to the little town of Watlington, stands the old castle of Shirburn, which for over 180 years has been the home of the Earls of Macclesfield. If you arrive by rail you may notice that the line runs for some distance parallel with part of the old Watling Street, which goes across England from London to Wroxeter. The country around Shirburn is distinctly picturesque. To the north lies a spur of the Chiltern Hills, along which the great beech woods stretch for many miles; whilst within a short distance lies the village of Ewelme, the church and almshouses of which were described some time ago in these pages. Shirburn, however, is by far the most interesting feature of that part of the country in which it is situated. Entirely surrounded by a moat, the waters of which wash its very walls like a Venetian canal, it is one of the few inhabited castles in England to which access is only possible by means of drawbridges. An iron footbridge, however, substituted for purposes of convenience for one of the drawbridges, now connects the back door with the outer world. The building is of Norman architecture, and is supposed to have been erected by the Comte de Tanquerville, one of the followers of William the Conqueror; the castle is battlemented and built in

the form of a square, with round towers placed at each corner, an open court being left in the centre of the building.

In form the castle has been absolutely untouched, though naturally the course of years has called for many improvements, and it has been found necessary to alter the interior in many ways, thus making it possible to arrange the rooms according to modern ideas and requirements, which are considerably more luxurious and less warlike than those of our forefathers.

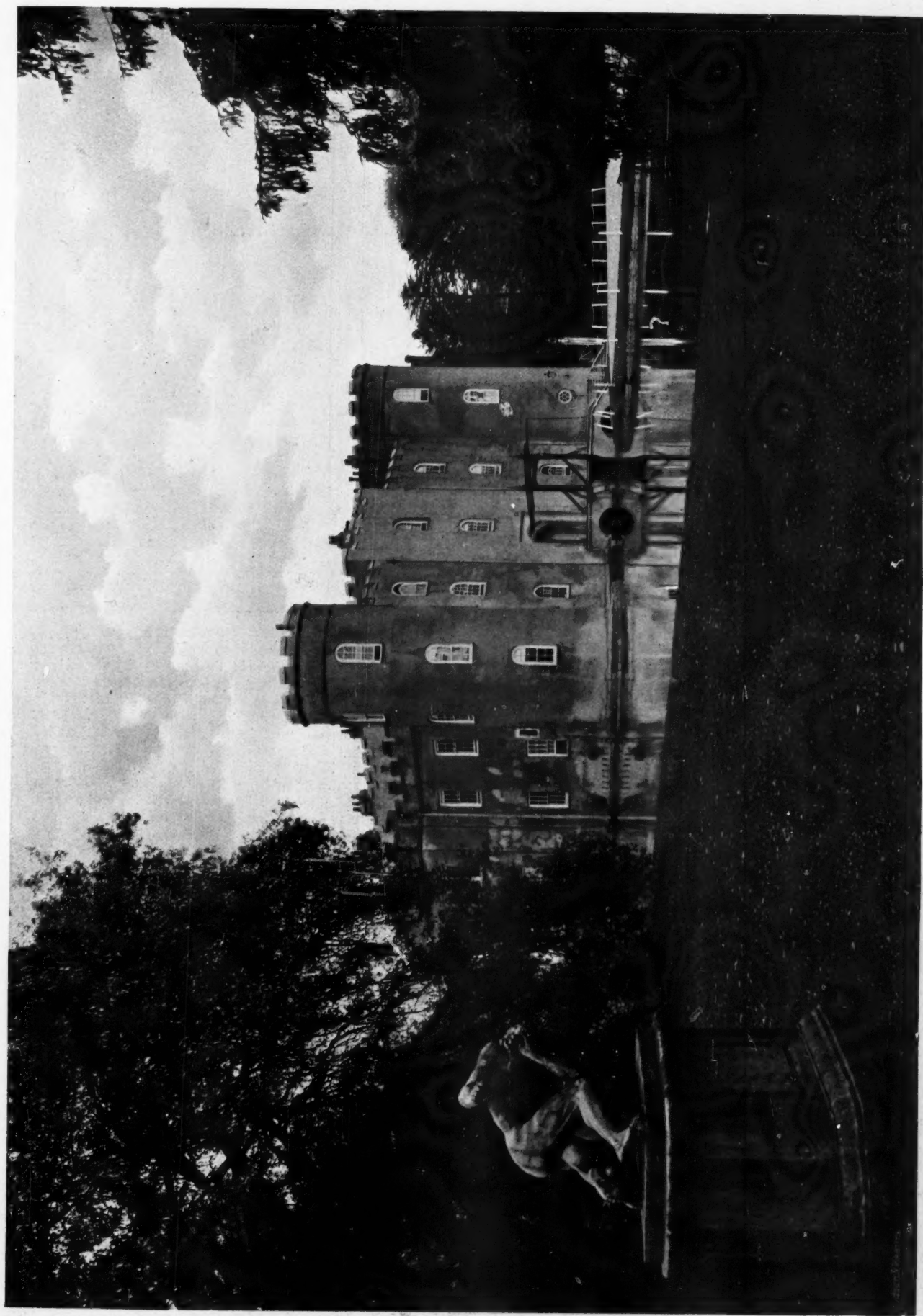
We find the first written account of Shirburn—or Sherborne as it was then spelt—in Kennett's "Parochial Antiquities," where we read that "in the year 1141, Brien Fitz Count, Lord of Wallingford, received under his custody William Martel, Sewer to King Stephen . . . and for his ransom had the castle of Sherborne." In 1231, Henry le Tyes held the castle, and from him it passed to his sister, wife of Warine de l'Isle, then to their son Gerard de l'Isle, who was succeeded at his death by Warine, his son and heir. "Warine de l'Isle departed this life 28th June, 6 Richd. II.," leaving his property to his daughter Margaret, wife of Thomas, Lord Berkeley, and their daughter Elizabeth, who married Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, inherited in her turn the lands which came by her mother. A manuscript was



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A BEAUTIFUL WALK.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



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GARDENS OLD AND NEW.—SHIRBURN CASTLE FROM THE LAWN.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



Copyright

A GLADE FROM THE UPPER GARDEN.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

found in 1866, saying: "Shirburn granted to Quatremayne in the 5th of Henry VI." It then passed to Thomas Fowler, and by exchange from the Fowlers to the Chamberlaines.

This brings us to the time of the Civil Wars, when the historic interest of the castle begins. In all probability Shirburn was the scene of more than one encounter between the rival forces of Roundhead and Cavalier, for Chalgrove Field—which is but a few miles distant towards Oxford—was the place where in 1643 Hampden received the wound of which he shortly afterwards died; whilst tradition says that after the battle he went to the little village of Pyrton, which lies just across the park. Shirburn itself bears traces of the war, for when in 1858 the solid oak entrance doors, which are studded with large iron nails, were relieved of the many coats of white paint with which they had been disfigured, several bullets were found flattened in the wood.

On referring to the old documents, it would seem that the Chamberlaines of those days were not less willing than those of our own times to sit on both sides of the House, for the then occupants of Shirburn seem to have wished to steer an entirely neutral course in the stormy days of the Civil Wars. We read that "General Fairfax (in 1646), upon a second petition from Mistress Chamberlaine, of Sherburn House, in Oxfordshire, hath accepted of its surrender. The General, upon her first petition, advised her to address herself to Parliament, which it seems she did, but by reason of other great affairs obtained no positive answer. Although the house hath been a garrison, yet neither at the first coming of the Parliament's forces to Oxford this time twelvemonth, nor subsequently, have they annoyed their forces; but, on the contrary, have contributed provisions to the maintenance of those troops employed about

Wallingford, as other parts have done. This house, being kept by some men-at-arms in it by Master Chamberlaine, prevented the making of the same an active garrison for the King, which would have much annoyed Henley and those parts, and have only stood upon their guard to defend themselves from plunder, and never took any of the Parliament's soldiers prisoners, nor offered violence to them, nor raised contributions from the country."

In 1622, Sir Thomas Gage married Mary, daughter of John Chamberlaine, Esq., of Shirburn, and their son Joseph inherited Shirburn from his mother, but it did not remain long in this family, for in 1716 it was sold with the estate, and was bought by Lord Parker, afterwards first Earl of Macclesfield, to whose descendants it still belongs. As you pass over the front drawbridge—there are three of these bridges, placed south, east, and west—the grooves in which the old portcullis used to work may still be seen, though the last remains of the gate itself



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THE BARONIAL HALL.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

crumbled away about forty years ago.

On the left of the entrance is the baronial hall, a long corridor running parallel with the drawing-room, which faces north; the walls of the hall, as will be seen in the illustration, are hung with some very old pieces of armour, with pistols and swords, muskets and carbines of the old-fashioned flint and steel type, whilst some old regimental colours are also displayed here.

Over the drawing-room is the library, which contains a collection of books remarkable for its value and the rarity of some of its volumes. This library was founded by the Lord Chancellor Macclesfield. He and his son, the second Earl, were the patrons of William Jones, Esq., an eminent mathematician, a contemporary and admirer of Sir Isaac Newton. He lived at Shirburn as one of the family, and died there in 1749, leaving to his patron the large and valuable library of books which he had collected. The library now consists of about 14,000 volumes, and includes many very old and interesting manuscripts. Amongst these literary treasures are several letters from eminent mathematicians of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; some of them are of very special interest, being from no less a personage than the great Sir Isaac himself. There are also some rare and unique Welsh manuscripts and books in this library, and amongst the Caxtons is the "Mirrour of the World," translated by me, simple person William Caxton, out of French into English, and printed in Westminster Abbey in 1481."

The whole of our time must not, however, be spent among the books, though they would repay the careful study of a book-lover, and we must give some of our attention to the avenues and walks, for these, indeed, form one of the chief attractions of Shirburn. On the north side of the house



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THE AVENUE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

grow some magnificent illexes, strong beautiful trees, which have attained a very great height, and are among the finest specimens to be found in England. Long avenues of elm and beech trees, which flourish particularly in the chalky soil of this part of the country, are a great feature of the place, and there is a peculiar charm in the formality of the broad grass walks, shaded by beautiful trees, which are characteristic of the dignified solemnity of the house.

One long glade stretches from east to west, starting from a domed temple, whilst an avenue from the north-west corner of the house strikes diagonally into this walk, and continues as far as the kennels, empty since the late Lord Macclesfield gave up the Mastership of the South Oxfordshire Hounds, which he had held for nearly thirty years.

Perhaps water, whether it be lake, stream, or pond, adds



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THE FLOWER GARDEN.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

more than anything else to the picturesqueness of a place, and in this respect Shirburn is not wanting. In the spring time, when the trees are all bright with their fresh green leaves of various shades, before they have reached the monotonous stage which summer brings to them, or in the autumn, when the beech trees have just begun to turn, and their colour forms a contrast to the other trees, and a clear reflection is thrown in the water, a very pretty walk is by the side of the Long Pond, of which an illustration is given, and which is fed by a stream which runs across the park.

On the east front of the house, beyond the tennis courts—which occupy a large stretch of ground, five courts being marked out on one lawn—lies another piece of water, fringed with a border of red dogwood, communicating with the Upper Duckery, which is stocked with various kinds of duck, which wander across the lawns from one piece of water to another, and are generally to be found on the moat under the dining-room windows at meal times.



Copyright

THE STABLE ENTRANCE.

"C.L."

The moat itself has an interesting story, for in the year 1755, at the time of the great earthquake, when Lisbon was destroyed, and St. Ubes swallowed up, an extraordinary motion was observed in the water of this moat. A full account of this strange occurrence is to be found in Vol. 49 of "Philosophical Transactions," from which we will quote: "There was a pretty thick fog, not a breath of air, and the surface of the water all over the

moat as smooth as a looking-glass, except at one corner, where it flowed into the shore and retired again successively in a surprising manner. Every flood began gently, its velocity increasing by degrees, until at length it rushed in with great impetuosity till it had attained its full height. Having remained for a little time stationary, it then retired, ebbing gently at first, but afterwards sinking away with great swiftness. At every flux the whole body of the water seemed to be violently thrown against



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THE MOAT.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



Copyright

THE KENNELS.

"C.L."

the bank, but neither during the time of the flux nor that of the reflux did there appear even the least ripple of a wave on other parts of the moat.

"Lord Parker, who had observed this motion, being desirous to know whether it was universal over the moat, sent a person to the other corner of it; at the same time he himself stood about 25yds. from him to examine whether the water moved there or not. He could not perceive any motion there, but another person who went to the north-east corner of the moat, diagonally opposite to his lordship, found it as considerable there as where he was. His lordship, imagining that in all probability the water at the corner diagonally opposite to where he was would sink as that by him rose, ordered the person to signify by calling out when the water by him began to sink, and when to rise. This he did, but to his lordship's great surprise, immediately after the water began to rise at his own end, he heard the voice calling out that it began to rise with him also, and in the same manner he heard that it was sinking at his end soon after he perceived it to sink by

himself. A pond just below was agitated in a similar manner, but the risings and sinkings happened at different times from those at the moat."

Only some of the chief and most noticeable features have been touched upon in this short account of Shirburn, and though much remains that is worthy of mention both within and without the walls, perhaps sufficient has been said to convey some idea of the antiquity of the building, the interest of its library, and the charm of its surroundings.

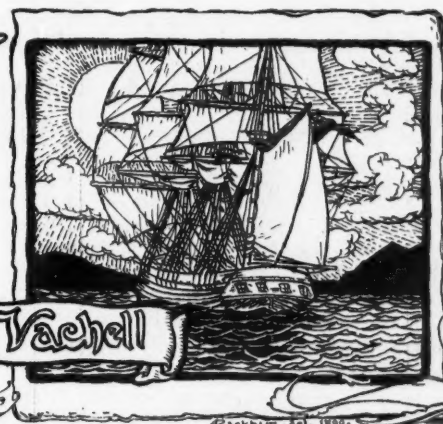
John Charity

A Romance of Yesterday

Containing certain adventures and love passages in Alta California of John Charity, yeoman of Cranberry Orcas in the County of Hampshire, England as set down by himself.

Edited by

Horace Amesley Vachell



CHAPTER III.

WESTWARD HO!

THE reader will, doubtless, have guessed that the tap root of my distress and of my objections to this match lay deep in my own heart. When we were children together the little maid had been my sweetheart, and as we grew up, although my brain was busy with other matters, yet my heart was faithful to her, and gradually, as the down coarsened on my cheeks, so also those nebulous, intangible fancies and desires, the floss out of which is woven love, became as ropes of steel, binding the present to the future. That kiss I spoke of turned them into ropes of sand.

Looking back, after the lapse of years, and with such experience of life as I have gleaned, I can see how ill-equipped the poor scholar was to play the part of lover. I might have won her, the pretty dear, had I wooed her—as maids wish to be wooed—ardently; but love with me was a thing apart from life, laid in lavender, kept under lock and key. None guessed my secret save Letty, and I know she was kinder to me on that account, more tender, more lovable, so that I was the more inflamed, and my loss, contrasted with Courtenay's gain, proved a grievous and intolerable burden. For he seemed to have all the gifts of the gods, and could have chosen a wife out of the Book of Beauty, or out of that other book that Englishmen hold sacred—the Peerage—and yet he had been constrained to rob me, his foster-brother and true friend, of a simple country maid.

None the less, I can say that I still loved him and admired him. Now, it is plain that he often imposed upon that love and admiration, being at the core somewhat selfish and thoughtless of others' feelings. He learned early the expediency of never doing for himself what another might do for him. When we were lads, I remember, he would ask me again and again the time of day, although he carried a handsome gold watch of his own, and he would borrow half-a-crown with the air of a monarch conferring the Order of the Golden Fleece. It seems now, although then such a thought never entered my head, that in regard to his wooing he had unwittingly suffered me, so to speak, to prepare the soil that he might reap the crop, for I cannot doubt that Letty, marking my amorous glances, learned the first lesson of love—anticipation. Expecting (the witch confessed it later) something from me and getting nothing, she fell an easy victim to the silver-tongued Courtenay.

My message mellowed somewhat during the time that elapsed between the kiss I gave blushing Letty and the moment that I found myself alone with her lover. I had not the heart to deliver it in her presence, for both she and he had quick tempers, and I feared that they might marry in haste, whipped to folly by Sir Marmaduke's keen tongue. In Spain I had learned the meaning of the word "mañana," and accordingly urged not renunciation but procrastination.

Finally, we agreed that for the present it would be wise to keep secret the engagement. I promised to tell my mother at once, and did so that same afternoon. Dear woman! the match was of her making, and it pains me, now that she is dead, to criticise so fond a creature. Yet, who can deny that she acted unwisely? She was monstrously pleased when she learned that the lovers had actually plighted troth, and her vanity so bubbled and flowed over that I could not but smile, and lacked the moral courage to protest against it. Moreover, I dared not speak out what was festering in my mind, fearing that I might betray myself. I had agreed with Courtenay that Sir Marmaduke must be advised that his message was duly delivered, and my mother firmly believed that the wind would be tempered to these lambs. "Sir Marmaduke," she said, innocently, "is failing; he ate but once of my pie, and shunned the ginger cordial. He cannot plague us much longer."

The Baronet thanked me civilly, and asked no questions. My face, you may be sure, was blank as a stone wall, yet he guessed, I fancy, what I tried to conceal, and smiled doubtless in his sleeve at the donkey who counted himself a diplomat.

Courtenay swore to me that he would be careful not to compromise Letty by too ardent attentions, and the pair of us actually believed that we were throwing dust in Sir Marmaduke's eyes. Lord, what fools we were!

Austin, of course, watched us out of the tail of his eye, and beguiled my mother to the very brink of confession. "I'm sure," said she, "that he is our friend, and he has influence with Sir Marmaduke." 'Tis true that he had influence with his father, and to this day I am unable to account for so strange a fact; for the two had little in common, save an insane and un-Christian pride of the house of Valence, a pride conspicuously wanting in Courtenay, who, with my mother's milk, perhaps, imbibed a yeoman's simplicity and sense of humour. The ludicrous appealed to my foster-brother as strongly as it appeals to me, and what is more likely to stir men to laughter than the windy, bombastic self-assertion and arrogance of an egoist of the stamp of Austin Valence. Believing him to be a prig of prigs, we stupidly belittled him, and paid dearly for our folly.

One day, late in September, Courtenay and I rode into Southampton, and there, coming out of a tavern near the docks, whom should we see but old Mark Jaynes, the friend and hero of our youth. He was little changed; the broad face had a purplish cast, and he carried a larger paunch; the nose, too, seemed a thought longer and sharper, as if it had poked itself into more than one tight place since we last had seen it. We were strolling along afoot, having left our horses in charge of the hostler at the White Hart Inn, so we purposely ran athwart the captain, and, then heaving to, craved his pardon.

"Is this Captain Jaynes?" said Courtenay, doffing his hat and bowing.

"Aye," growled the captain. "Mark Jaynes it is—at your service, gentlemen."

"We must arrest you," said Courtenay. "It's our duty to—"

The old fellow began to bristle up.

"To arrest you," continued Courtenay, "on the criminal charge of cutting dead two old friends."

A grin betokened recognition.

"It's Master Courtenay and John Charity."

We each took an arm, and escorted him in triumph back to the tavern he had just left. There we engaged a private room and a bottle of Madeira, and later—for the wine was poor stuff—a bowl of punch. For a time our three tongues wagged at once; then the captain, who had a fine gift of the gab, began to recite his adventures, and the old glamour spread its spell upon us. Smuggling, it seemed, was at an end, and our friend was now master and part owner of a fine barque about to sail for the Californias with a cargo of general merchandise.

"'Tis my last trip," said the captain. "I shall marry a señorita"—he smacked his thick lips—"and settle down upon a rancho. There is no finer country than Alta California upon God's footstool—a land, my lads, of milk and honey. And the women love the sailors. The Dons—aye, the bluest blooded of 'em—admit it, and are like to go mad because of it. By the Lord! didn't my own boatswain, red-headed Ben Buston from Winchester, marry a beauty, with a name as long as a man-o'-war's pennant, and a big estate pinned to her petticoat? He had to join the true church, o' course; but there," and he winked in the old, delightful fashion. "Ben told me that he left his conscience at Cape Horn in charge o' Mother Carey's chickens, and I hope it didn't choke 'em. The padre at the Mission in Santa Barbara made Ben walk barefoot, with not a stitch on but a sheet, a-holding a lighted taper in his hand, from the beach to the church door; but behind the door was the señorita, and behind the Mission the good leagues o' land!"

To this, and much more, we listened, vastly amused at the thought of this ancient mariner wedded to a blooming Californian and lord of rolling leagues and countless herds. You may be sure that we visited the barque, and inspected, with interest, the captain's curios: abalone shells, pearls from the Peninsula,

some wondrous baskets, weaved by the Indians so closely and cunningly that they actually held water, opals from Mexico, and an amazing bit and bridle, inwrought with gold and silver. Before we parted Mark Jaynes opened a bottle of Cognac, that I'll warrant had paid no duty, and we drank solemnly to the lotos-land and the lovely women, not forgetting honest Ben Buston and the red-headed babies that his wife had borne him.

"My lads," said Mark, in conclusion, "I would that a sight of Alta California could be vouchsafed ye. It hath a glorious future, sure, and 'twill belong in time to our people. The Yankees are crossing the mountains already, but I look to see the flag of England float above the *presidio* at Monterey. These Dons are an indolent lot, pleasure loving, content to lie in the sun gorged with beef and *frijol*, and the good *padres* who ruled the land well and wisely have seen their sun set for ever. Ye were lads of spirit, I mind me; why don't ye up anchor, and sail with

He told the officers quartered at Winchester, and others of his acquaintance, that his brother Courtenay was pursuing a common amour, and skilfully painted him as a Lothario; yet he hinted, with incredible baseness, that this was no case of seduction, inasmuch as the young woman had bestowed her favours upon others, including one who was not given to boasting of his *bonnes fortunes*. I make certain he calculated that either Courtenay would be hounded into hasty marriage and ruin by the yapping of the gossips, or Lettice, falling a victim to slander, and driven from her true lover's arms, might become his own prey.

Upon the day we met Mark Jaynes the mine laid by this villain prematurely exploded. It happened on this wise. Courtenay and I had accepted an invitation to sup at the George Inn, in Winchester, with an old Wykehamist, an officer quartered in the town. Austin was of the party, and a good deal of wine was drunk and as many jests cracked as bottles. Presently a certain



"We engaged a private room and . . . a bowl of punch."

old Mark Jaynes to the Canaan that lies upon the shores of the Pacific?"

And why not, we asked ourselves, as we rode home through the pleasant woods of Stoneham—why not?

Fate answered that question within twenty-four hours.

I have now to set down (in ink no blacker than the story) the history of an attempt on the part of Austin Valence to rob Letty of fair name and reputation. The scoundrel, a spy and an eavesdropper, must have learned that this pure maid was as far from his reach as the evening star; and knowing also, or guessing, that Courtenay was her plighted lover, having, moreover, his finger upon the pulse of Sir Marmaduke's pride, in possession doubtless of the message entrusted to me, coveting, perhaps, the handsome allowance of his brother and the money that would be his at the Baronet's death—bearing, in short, all these matters in mind, he conceived a hellish scheme of revenge.

captain of cavalry, quite unknown to me, the son of a rich merchant in London—a man of fashion but of no breeding—began to rally Courtenay upon his love intrigue.

"Egad!" said this buck, who was more fool than knave; "I hear that the girl is a famous beauty, and has made more than one man happy. We wondered why you had forsaken your old friends, my dear fellow; but tell us her name, and promise me an introduction, and we will toast her—this Venus of Cranberry-Orcas!"

"Sir," replied my foster-brother, "you talk in riddles. I know of no such lady, nor is it my habit to forsake old friends, nor to overlook the insolence of new ones."

He was furiously angry, I could see, but outwardly cool and collected. The captain flushed and laughed harshly.

"You are dense to-night," he retorted, quickly. "Come, I will give you a clue to the enigma. We have Scriptural warrant that there be three blessings vouchsafed to good men—Faith,

Hope, and Charity, and the greatest of these, as you must know, is Charity."

The table was in a tumult as the words left his lips, for those present, excepting the speaker, knew my name, and knew also that I was of kin to the lady. Perhaps my yeoman's blood moves somewhat sluggishly, for before I could act, so stunned was I at this stranger's speech, Courtenay had taken the initiative. He held in his hand a cut-glass goblet of champagne, and this he hurled at the face opposite with so true an aim that in a second the captain found himself drenched with wine and blood.

"Curse you!" sputtered the dandy, convulsed with pain. "I'll kill you for this, Courtenay Valence."

My foster-brother bowed. "We cannot meet too soon," said he, coldly.

Then I pushed forward. "'Tis my affair," said I, fiercely. "My name is Charity, and charity foully abused, as this gentleman will find, is even a greater curse than a blessing."

But here the others interfered, and Captain Phillipson was dragged from the room by a couple of friends. I turned to my foster-brother and repeated that it was my affair.

"Gentlemen," said he, "I appeal to you. Whose affair is this?"

"Faith!" exclaimed a grizzled major, "you have set your brand upon the captain, and he'll do his best to return the compliment, or I don't know the man."

"Jack," said Courtenay, "you shall act for me, and, by God, if I fall you can try your luck."

As he spoke I caught Austin's eye, and marked the expression upon his ugly face. My befogged wits were clear in a jiffy. 'Twas he who had wrought this evil.

"Courtenay," said I, "you will forgive me when you learn my reason, but I cannot be your friend now. Find another man."

He turned from me with a gesture of annoyance; then he approached Austin.

"I must ask you, brother, to receive the message that Phillipson must send. The honour of the Valences is safe in your hands."

"Pray excuse me," murmured Austin, coldly. "You acted hastily, and should apologise."

Courtenay stared at him in amazement and laughed.

"Something more than skin and glass has been cracked to-night," he said, "and no apology will mend that. Stracey," he spoke to our host, "will you refuse to help me?"

"Not I," said Stracey, taking his arm. "Come, this is no place for you. Major, my friend and I may be found at the Black Swan opposite. Perhaps you will so advise Captain Phillipson's seconds. I wish you all good-night."

As the door closed upon Courtenay and our old school-fellow, I came forward and spoke.

"Gentlemen, some of you know my cousin, and you all know me. The villain who has tried to stain the fair fame of the best and purest maiden in the Itchen Valley stands there," and I pointed to Austin Valence, "and my mark shall be placed on him."

With that I caught him by the nose, a large and amorphous nose that came to him from the distaff side, held it firmly between thumb and forefinger, and with my open right hand struck him twice upon the cheek. Such honest powder lay behind the blow that he spun round like a teetotum, and dropped half-senseless to the floor.

"Major," said I, "a word with you downstairs."

"With pleasure," he replied, for he had no love for Austin Valence, and we left the supper room, arm in arm.

The meetings that followed have been described elsewhere, for they brought about, indirectly, the famous ordinance of 1844, that ukase of the Commander-in-Chief that forbade, under severest penalties, the practice of duelling in the British Army, a practice, be it noted, that had the support and approval of His Grace the Duke of Wellington. We fought with pistols, at the same time and place, a fact that lent the double event notoriety. Fearing the interference of the police, we met early, upon the morning following the supper, on the Winchester Downs, hard by that clump of trees known as Oliver Cromwell's Battery. Courtenay heard from my lips that I was about to meet his brother, and had no objections to offer. Indeed from the major I learned the whole truth, for that gallant officer was in possession of the garrison gossip, and Austin, so he told me, had sown his seed far and wide; most indiscreetly, the major said, not taking into account the fact that malice and hatred will whistle down the wind the prudence and judgment of even a Shylock. Moreover, Austin disproved the saying that conscience makes cowards of us, for he faced my pistol with a grim smile, and the determination, plain upon his face, to kill me if Fortune stood his friend. While the preliminaries of our affair were being arranged, and I was marvelling at the great self-control and coolness displayed by men when lives other than their own were at stake (the major was in high good humour, and Austin's

second had a Roland pat in exchange for an Oliver), Courtenay and Captain Phillipson fired; and soon after Stracey came running up from the far side of the Battery with the welcome news that Phillipson had been winged, that my foster-brother was not touched, and that the captain had apologised for his misdemeanour and declared himself satisfied. I gripped the butt of my pistol the firmer for this intelligence, and Austin's cheek—the one I had not slapped—turned, I fancied, a pale saffron in hue, but this may have been a trick of the sun, which rose at that instant behind a reek of blue smoke.

Then I heard the major's jolly voice, crisp and clear: "Gentlemen, you will fire at the word three. The man who reserves his fire, for even the fraction of a second, will be held responsible to me and to society."

I paid no attention to him, but fixed my glance upon Austin. Frankly, I hoped to kill him, and wished from the bottom of my heart that a sword and not a pistol were in my hand.

"One!" said the major, and I felt my muscles tighten.

"Two!" I caressed the trigger.

"Three!"

We fired together, and a bullet grazed my left shoulder. Then I saw Austin stagger forward, gripping his smoking pistol, and fall headlong. The others, including the doctor, ran to his assistance; but I stood still, trembling and distraught with anxiety. Now that my enemy lay prostrate before me, I prayed that he was not dead, yet I knew that my aim had been good, that my bullet must lie near his heart. It seemed an eternity before the major joined me, and said gravely that my ball had passed through the left lung.

"Hé has his gruel," said the major. "It would be wise for both of us to lie snug till the noise of this affair has abated."

"Michaelmas Term begins on the Tenth," said I.

"Egad!" replied the veteran, "this morning's work, my lad, has robbed you of your honours at Oxford. Come, cheer up, it might be worse—ay? What if you were lying there?"

So I hugged such comfort as his words suggested to my bosom, and started hot foot for the Abbey Farm. There I took my father aside and told him what had passed. To my surprise, he took the matter very coolly.

"Jack," said he, "thou art not the stuff they make book-worms out of, and I'm right glad you struck a stout blow in defence of the little lass. The villain hath his deserts, I'll warrant. And now, my lad, as the major says, thou must lie snug. Pack thy duds and be off to Southampton, and there take the first ship sailing for foreign parts. I can give thee money, for, as luck would have it, I have here a draft on Baring's for two hundred pounds, the price of my fat steers, and I can spare all of it to a good son. And now—as time presses—be off. Kiss thy mother and the little lass, and leave all further speech to me."

I told him briefly that I had a friend in need in old Mark Jaynes, and that the Californias might prove my destination. My father whistled, but made no objections, and promised to send me word of Austin before the barque sailed. I had seen Courtenay for a minute, and he had told me that as soon as a lodging had been found for Austin he would join me in Southampton. Although we had spoken of Alta California, he had said nothing of accompanying me, yet I feared that he would find a sorry welcome at the Court and an oak door, may be, slammed in his face. The Dean, too, if he heard of the duel, would not suffer him to return to Christ Church.

Although two hundred pounds was a sum larger than my necessities, I was forced to accept it for the present, for the draft, like the babe of the woman who appealed to Solomon, could not be divided. I reflected also that my father was well-to-do, and would surely be offended if I refused his gift. Perhaps my mother marvelled at the kisses I pressed upon her comely face, but she and Lettice were busy in the making of crab-apple jelly, and both bade me good-temperedly begone. 'Twas indeed a blessed dispensation, for I have no stomach for partings, and had those two fond creatures suspected the truth, I had got a surfeit of grief; and my heart was heavy enough, you may take your oath, without being freighted with women's tears.

The comical part of the story was my reception by Mark Jaynes, and the bloodthirsty delight he took in the recital of my woes, for woes indeed they were to me, and I counted myself as sorely wounded as Austin Valence. I have not spoken as yet of my college career, but it was not without promise, and I had learned to love the *pulverem Olympicum*, the dust of competition that lies thick in the schools, choking the many and stimulating the few. And now the bays within my grasp had withered!

"Killed a man," exclaimed old Mark, slapping his thigh: "d'ye call him a man, a puppy that 'twere flattery to call a dog? Cheer up, my bully boy, and believe me that this parson's gabble about the sanctity of human life is only fit to stuff a goose with—green sauce, Jack, to one who hath fought under Lord Nelson. Do I sleep the less soundly because I've slit many a Frenchman's throat? Not I, my lad," and he stretched out his long, sinewy arms, and laughed hoarsely.

"And the honours the scholars prate of and prize! What are they, Jack? Spume of the sea! Spume of the sea! Why

the applause of your musty Dons would be no more to a sailor than the humming of the wind in the ratlins. Your hand, my lad, for you're a man now, and have tasted blood."

I could not keep my face straight, for Mark Jaynes, I knew, had a tender heart beneath his rough pilot coat, and this Cambyse's vein was assumed as a token of sympathy. Finally, I laughed myself into a happier humour, and discussed with better appetite plans for the future. The captain, however, opined that Southampton was no place to lie snug in—too near to Cranberry-Orcas, a town *infested* ('twas his word) with constables. The barque, he said, would not sail for a week, for the cargo was not all aboard, and meantime I might be arrested at any minute and clapped into gaol. He painted the perils of the moment in such vivid and startling colours, that I presently agreed to slip aboard a lugger sailing on the next tide for Plymouth. The captain winked so furiously, when he spoke of the lugger and the three men who sailed her, that I was led to infer that the joint-owners of the boat were as little anxious as I to linger long in Southampton. He assured me that I would be perfectly safe in their hands, and that he would pick me up a week hence off a fishing village in Devonshire, and would further charge himself with the purchase of an outfit suitable for one in my condition. Accordingly I placed my draft in his hands to be cashed, and he provided me with a few sovereigns, a suit of stout cloth, and a heavy cap such as pilots use—a most effective, if not becoming, disguise, or rather face extinguisher, for it left no features visible save the nose and upper lip.

We were to sail at midnight, and at nine by my watch Courtenay Valence found Jaynes and me at the tavern near the

docks, where we had made merry the day before. He told me at once that Austin was like to die, and that a warrant was out for my arrest. He had not seen Sir Marmaduke, he added, but Captain Phillipson had written the Baronet a very handsome letter, setting forth the facts of the case, and placing the blame, where it belonged, upon Austin, "but, I fear," said Courtenay, "that my father, who has met the captain, does not hold him in the highest esteem." I thought this so very probable that I answered nothing, and my own affairs clamouring for attention, we fell to discussing them, and forbore to speculate upon what Sir Marmaduke would do or not do.

My leave-taking with my foster-brother affected me deeply. His eyes were wet as he pressed my hand at parting, and my own were not dry. But he said not a word of taking passage to California, and I felt that his heart was at Cranberry-Orcas.

Where else could it have been?

And yet I was not suffered to sail alone to a foreign and distant land, for when, ten days later, I stepped aboard the barque, and bade good-bye to the owners of the lugger, who had sheltered me faithfully when the whole South of England was ringing with my name, and when Mark Jaynes held out his hand in greeting, I could feel in the magnetic pressure of that clasp and read in his sly, sparkling eyes that something of extraordinary interest had transpired. He stood by my side till the lugger was a dozen cable lengths astern. Then he pinched my arm, and led me, as home-sick a wretch as ever was driven from his native shore, to the companion-way and down into the main cabin, and there, with his arm around her waist, stood Courtenay Valence and—Lettice.

(To be continued.)

ABOUT HOAR-FROST.

WE, in the country, know sometimes only too well the beauty of hoar-frost. When it comes occasionally it is decidedly pretty, as its crystals sparkle in millions in the sun; but when it lies for a week at a time, as down here at this manse by the Isla side, it is difficult to think of its beauty. Yet the children who enjoy country life even in winter are delighted with the funny figures on the glass of the bedroom window on a cold morning. Frost is such a wonderful and fantastic artist. During the night "John" has been dipping his brush into something like diluted mica schist, and laying it gracefully on the smooth panes. And what a beautiful coloured effect there is when you look back through the chequered films on the moon in her last quarter! You see quaintly-carved groups of ice fern leaves, in varied forms and blending colours. If you examine these with a pocket magnifying glass you would be struck with their marvellous beauty in variety.

Again, after breakfast, as you walk over the meadows, you observe the thin white films of ice on the green pasture, and the clear, slender blades seem like crystal spears, or the "lashes of light that trim the stars." Sometimes, when the snow covers the earth and trees, the hoar-frost beautifully bedecks the whole with a million glistening diamonds. The young and healthy rejoice, with ruddy cheeks, to look on the fairy-like transformation and breathe the bracing air; but on those out of health hoar-frost exercises a chilling influence. A shiver thrills through their delicate frames with indescribable tenacity and killing rawness.



BY THE RIVER.

In the country hoar-frost generally receives the name of "rime," and "rotten rime" is the death-bearing form in which it is found when it is thawing. Now by what "secret ministry, unhelped by any wind," is hoar-frost formed? It is just frozen dew, and dew rises from the warmer ground into the cooler air. When the air is very cold the dew takes the form of hoar-frost. It was 115 years ago when Professor Wilson, of Glasgow, in that exceptionally cold winter, introduced the study of this phenomenon. He observed that when sheets of paper, pieces of board, and plates of metal were laid out at the Observatory during the night, all began to attract hoar-frost as soon as they had time to cool down to the temperature of the air. In the candle-light these objects were beautifully spangled over by innumerable reflections from minute crystals of hoar-frost. While the thermometer indicated 36deg. of frost a few feet above the ground, and 44deg. of frost at the surface of the snow, there were only 8deg. at a point 3in. below the surface of the snow. The remarkable fact startled him that 3in. of snow could form a mantle to keep out 36deg. of frost.

If in such a case the thermometer were placed on the grass under the snow it would only register the

freezing point. If the instrument were inserted a little into the ground it would read above the freezing point, the temperature increasing as the instrument is lowered. This fact leads us to the conclusion that the evaporation of hoar-frost is from the ground, the water vapour from the warmer soil being trapped by a cold stratum of air and frozen when in the form of dew.

One of the most interesting experiments, without apparatus,

which you can make is in connection with the formation of hoar-frost, when there is no snow on the ground, in very cold weather. This is the shortest day; and we do not have such successful observations as when the days are a little longer and the sun gets higher in the heavens. A few weeks ago we had the thermometer below zero; but there were 6in. of snow on the ground, and we could not on that account make the beautiful experiment. Had it been a bright, clear, sunny day in January the effect could have been better noticed.

Look over the garden, grass, and walks on the snowless morning after the intense cold of the night; big plane tree leaves may be found scattered over the place. You see little or no hoar-frost on the upper surface of the leaves. But turn up the surface which was next the earth, or the road, or the grass, and what will you see? You have only to handle the leaf in this way to be brightly astonished. A thick white coating of hoar-frost, as thick as a layer of snow, is on the under surface. Leaf after leaf will present the same appearance. If a number of leaves have been overlapping each other there will be no coating of hoar-frost under the top leaves; but, when you reach the lowest layer, next the bare ground, you will find the hoar-frost on the under surface of the leaves. Now that is positive proof that the hoar-frost has *not* fallen from the air, but has *risen* from the earth.

On the heaps of cut metal-stone at the side of the road you will find hoar-frost on the under surface of the stones, but not above. Why is this?

The sun's heat on the previous day warmed the earth. This heat the earth retained till evening. As the air chilled the water vapour from the warmer earth rose from its surface, and was arrested by the cold surface of the stones. So cold was that surface that it froze the water vapour when rising from the earth, and formed hoar-frost in very large quantities.

I have very exceptional opportunities for making these observations here, for my manse lies in a hollow beside the oak-copsed Isla, in the most beautiful of all Straths—Strathmore. In winter it is late in the forenoon before the sun's rays come over the "brae" in front. The rime may lie for days on that

bleak-lying brae, which is like to give one "hoar-frost on the brain."

I am particularly struck with the appearance of the dead leaves here and there during the winter. When the temperature is very low during the night, and there is no snow on the ground, I study the leaves and stones in the morning. There is very little hoar-frost on the upper surface of these, but whenever I turn them up on the road, or the grass, or the black earth, the under



POLLARDS GLORIFIED.

surface is very thickly covered with hoar-frost, just like packed snow. This shows that the warmer air rising from the earth has its water vapour suddenly collected and frozen by the intense cold. For years I have made interesting experiments on dew, which I hope to lay before you. And these notes will, I trust, stimulate people who are privileged with country life to be observant of little things and to study what is nearest their hand. Pure hoar-frost is bracing to many, black frost is exhilarating to more, but rotten rime is deadly to all. This irregularly formed hoar-frost floats about with its minute ice particles and makes every breath as word-thrust to weak lungs. The brilliancy of the crystals in hoar-frost makes up for many inconveniences.

J. G. McPHERSON.

Notes on Shooting.

WE seem to be at last awaking to the fact—a fact which some of us have been alive to all along—that though certain members of the peasant class, especially the peasantry of Ireland, would sooner starve than touch the flesh of a wood-pigeon, this same pigeon is a very sporting bird to shoot, a bird which affords excellent practice to the rifle shooter as well as to the game shot. Indeed, owing to the enormous increase that has taken place in the number of wood-pigeons in many parts of the country within the last few years, and to the fact that their depredations are becoming a matter for serious consideration, "pigeon clubs," as they are termed, have of late been organised in several of our large counties, the members of these clubs agreeing to post themselves about certain districts at least one day a fortnight during the winter, so that on "club days" a small army of guns is spread over a vast area, and the birds, being harassed all day, and fired at almost every time they attempt to perch, are killed by hundreds.

Though, of course, shots obtained as the birds are flashing overhead are both more sporting and more exhilarating than pot shots, many members



FAIRY-LIKE TRANSFORMATION.

of these newly-organised clubs prefer to use a miniature repeating rifle, and to reserve their fire until the birds perch. They maintain, with good reason, that they thus obtain far more shots, for the report of the small-bore rifle is so slight, that often, especially in a wind, several shots may be fired at the same bird. During a shoot of this sort which took place last week in South Devon—the guns were posted in Bigbury, Ringmore, Avelton Gifford, Kingston, Ugborough, Ermington, Modbury, Holbeton, and adjoining parishes—one expert rifle shot dropped no less than seven pigeons out of a flock of thirteen which had perched in a tree within 40yds or so of his hiding-place. The weapon which he handled was a miniature Winchester repeater, and apparently the birds, being up wind of him, did not notice the reports. A large pigeon club, organised on these lines, is being formed in Shropshire, and two clubs of the sort have been started in Yorkshire. Densely-wooded districts are, of course, the best suited for wood-pigeon shoots, but good sport can generally be obtained in hilly country of any kind.

Endless is the number of tales that have been told of tame pheasants being turned down in badly-preserved coverts a few days before the arrival of the guns, but the following story has the advantage of being true, and the incident of having occurred recently: A certain parvenu had invited to his house rather a large shooting party, taking it for granted that his coveris had been as well preserved as usual during his somewhat prolonged absence from home; but upon his returning to his country seat a week or so before the date fixed for the arrival of the guests, he discovered to his dismay that the whole of his woods were almost empty, owing, as it afterwards transpired, to the fact that his keepers had suddenly become transformed into a set of rogues and poachers. Being a man of resource, he at once telegraphed to London and elsewhere for some hundreds of live birds to be sent down to him without delay. Unfortunately, these consignments of game did not arrive until the very morning of the day upon which the guests were expected, but as soon as they did reach him they were turned down in the coverts in all haste. Next day, as soon as the beating began, some scores of pheasants came scurrying through the bracken and underwood, running this way and that, evidently in dire alarm, but not one of them, it seemed, could be induced to rise, and the only gun who appeared to be getting any sport worth speaking of was an individual posted at the furthestmost extremity of the covert and well out of sight. His total, indeed, at the end of the beat proved to be forty-three head, of which thirty-eight were pheasants—"regular twisters, every one of them," he declared, with some pride. All might have been well had not exactly the same thing occurred in the very next

beat, a coincidence which so thoroughly piqued the curiosity of one of the guns, who had seen nothing but runners, that he proceeded to examine the slain. And then the "mystery" was at once solved, for every dead bird was found to have one wing tied with thread, which the keeper had, in his hurry to turn down the pheasants before the arrival of the guests, completely forgotten to remove. It is added—but for the truth of this I cannot vouch—that on the very day of this unfortunate occurrence the hero of the "regular twisters" unexpectedly received an urgent summons back to town.

Upon all sides I hear complaints concerning a custom which is becoming more and more common amongst beaters, and has been especially marked during the past season. The practice is that known as "sweating" cartridge-bags. A few years ago it was no uncommon thing for beaters to annex, say, a handful of cartridges out of each of the bags confided to their care, and so long as they thus limited their depredations nobody felt inclined to grumble. But the vicious practice has, of late years, increased by leaps and bounds, until now it would seem as though nothing would satisfy the rapacious thieves but thirty or forty or more cartridges each a day. Now, consider what that means. A man accepts invitations to, let us say, twelve big shoots during the season, and we will take it that each shoot lasts only three days—a very low estimate. Now, supposing that his cartridge-bags are "sweated" to the extent of only twenty-five cartridges a day—again a low estimate—the total amount stolen from him will be 900. In several cases that have come under my notice the guns were robbed of their cartridges on a very much larger scale, and one well-known shooting man told me recently that he always allowed a margin of from £25 to £30 in his list of "incidental expenses" to cover the cost of cartridges stolen by beaters.

It is difficult to see how these "pilferings" can be put a stop to, or to say whether they can be checked at all. We have not, I take it, moral courage enough to tell our hosts openly that cartridges have been filched from us during our visit, and few of us have even enough moral courage to provide our cartridge-bags with locks. There is a device which registers automatically every shot fired out of the gun to which it is affixed, but even that only helps to prove to us more clearly that our cartridges are being purloined; it in no way helps to put a stop to the system of wholesale robbery. It is possible that beaters might not dare to "lift" cartridges stamped with the owner's name, that they might, indeed, have a difficulty in finding a market for cartridges so marked. At any rate, many men who shoot on a large scale intend next season to have their names printed on all their cartridge-cases, even on their "grouse" cases.

TAZZLE.



AT THE THEATRE

MR. TREE has idealised the ideal, gilded the lily, and added beauty and poetry to Shakespeare's beautiful and poetical fairy comedy. If there were nothing else, the vision of loveliness provided by the brush of Mr. Hawes Craven, in his picture of "Another

Part of the Wood near Athens"—its glades, its mossy banks, its glimpse of shimmering water—the latest effort of the management of Her Majesty's Theatre would be remarkable and worthy of all praise and all support. The art of illusion could no further go; it is one of the most beautiful scenes ever placed upon the stage. Mr. Harker's landscapes and Mr. Anderson's dresses, too, are beyond all cavil.

But there is much else. There is Mendelssohn's music, delightfully played, delightfully sung by the full rich voice of Miss Julia Neilson, the stately and splendid Oberon, by crowds of tiny elves disporting themselves in the fairy glens; there is the opportunity of seeing Mr. Tree in his element, giving us the full-bodied fun of Shakespeare's Weaver in a thick, unctuous voice—a yokel of the yokels, from the tip of his red nose to the soles of his big feet, revelling in the humour of it; there are lovely women in plenty; there is a gorgeous scene at the end, in Theseus's Palace, where the marble pillars glow with light, and the plinths and capitals become translucent and give to the revels of Titania and Oberon and their fairy hordes a wonderful and elfish aspect.

More than all, there is the spirit of Shakespeare hovering everywhere—the music of Shakespeare's words, the humour of Shakespeare's fun. It is not flawless, but "A Midsummer Night's Dream" at Her Majesty's Theatre is a Shakespearian performance of which Mr. Tree may be very proud.

It went a little slowly in parts on the first night. Perhaps the actors thought that the imagery and warmth and beauty

with which the poet has told his story could not be too greatly emphasised. This is a mistake, and it is a mistake which will soon be remedied. With such beauty and such intelligence and good intent, our Hippolyta (Miss Miriam Clements)

and our Hermia (Miss Brooke) will cease to linger so lovingly over their lines, and will add briskness to the quality of charm and grace they already show. Our Helena (Miss Dorothea Baird) is already free from fault; she spoke admirably, with clearness, emphasis, and with a natural speed of delivery which detracted nothing from the poetry of it.

Nor could we have a better Oberon—more imposing, more splendid—than the Oberon of Miss Julia Neilson, who looked so noble and sang so sweetly. Nor a more fairy-like Titania than Mrs. Tree, who floated so lissomely around and was a veritable fairy queen, if not quite the very dignified Titania whom Shakespeare drew, in order to make her the more ridiculous later, as the lady in love with the Ass. Miss Louie Freear's Puck was a little out of the picture, and that curious laugh of hers, so often repeated, got on one's nerves. Miss Freear was a hard-working Puck and a nimble one, but not very much more.

Contrasted with these lovely fairy scenes are the boorish humours of the mechanics, Quince and his fellows. They are altogether admirable. The discussions of the representation of the comedy of "Pyramus and Thisbe," and more especially the representation itself, were full of real Shakespearian fun, richly comical and hilariously ridiculous. Mr. Tree, as Bottom, "let himself go," and spared himself nothing. "He was the silly oaf to the life, a fine broad bit of character painting. And the Ass's head is quite magnificent. Mr. Franklin McLeay, as Quince, gave us all those little bits of observation and character we expect of him, and acted as earnestly and minutely as though he were interpreting Cassius or Hubert. Mr. Louis Calvert, Mr. Percival Stevens, Mr. Fisher White, and Mr. E. M. Robson



aided and abetted them in their clever stupidity, and made their scenes as funny as could be. Mr. Lewis Waller, evidently suffering from severe hoarseness, struggled bravely through as Lysander, and lent his usual spirit and manliness to the general success. Mr. William Mollison, Mr. Cookson, Mr. Gerald Lawrence, and Mr. Norman McKinnel could hardly be improved upon.

Stately and whimsical, fervent and funny, poetical and splendid, with faults that are merely temporary or merely minor, "A Midsummer Night's Dream" is a delightful entertainment.

WHOLLY commendable in design and execution is the revival of "She Stoops to Conquer" at the Haymarket Theatre. It could hardly be otherwise with Miss Winifred Emery ready at hand to show us the graces of the adorable Kate. To many of us in whose estimation "She Stoops to Conquer" does not rank with "The School for Scandal," or even "The Rivals," in the forefront of standard comedy, Goldsmith's play becomes remagnetised by the appearance in it of Miss Emery, Mr. Cyril Maude, Mr. Giddens, and the Haymarket company; more strongly, too, because we know that at the Haymarket it will be played, as far as possible, as a comedy of manners, with farcical interludes, of course, but not as a roaring farce merely, full of ridiculous exaggerations and highly-coloured caricatures.

And so it turned out. Miss Emery enchanted as Miss Hardcastle. Demure, roguish, it had an added touch of sentiment which came fresh and delightful in the harum-scarum piece, and lent to it at intervals an air of nature and reality too often foreign to it in previous representations which have striven only to show us the rougher humours of the play. The touch of sentiment imparted to it by Miss Emery and Mr. Paul Arthur, who, as Young Marlow, acted with spirit, with charm, and with finesse, indicating, with many admirable little touches, that, beneath the curious exterior and outward manner of the young gallant, he was always a gentleman and a sincere and manly fellow. This touch of sentiment gave "She Stoops to Conquer" a quality of truth and earnestness too often absent, and did this most excellent thing without detracting in any way from its legitimate humour.

The pensiveness of her and the fervour of him made the bonny Kate and the bashful-cum-blatant Young Marlow more than usually attractive in their more serious moments, and gave the force of contrast to their bouts at badinage as barmaid and blade. We appreciated all the more the scenes where she, her real self, the lady, and he, his real self, the bashful and silent suitor, were able to play with delicacy and refinement. Many novel and graceful little touches here came with all the freshness of the unexpected, and went far towards ensuring the exceptionally hearty welcome received by this revival of an oft-seen "old comedy."

Then there was also the Hardcastle of Mr. Cyril Maude to add to the pleasure we felt in seeing the well-worn old play treated rationally and with discretion without any elimination of its fun. Mr. Maude was exceedingly amusing; he gave us one of his perfect little character studies, making the most of all the good things the author has provided, but never causing us to forget that Mr. Hardcastle was a gentleman and a man of sense, not a mere buffoon. More difficult even than this was it for Mr. George Giddens to retain the bucolic flavour and the elephantine joking of Tony, while at the same time restraining the conventional clowning which has grown up around the part. But he, too, succeeded in keeping in touch with the subtle suggestion of delicacy and refinement which we expect at the Haymarket—a refinement quite legitimate and justifiable even in the performance of these old comedies—without denuding the character of its broad farcicality. So with Mr. Valentine's Diggory, a most artistic, comical, and entertaining piece of acting; so with Miss Ferrar, a charming, vivacious, and attractive Miss Neville; so with Miss M. A. Victor, as quaint and whimsical a Mrs. Hardcastle as could be imagined or desired. For the rest, the minor parts were all rendered on the same plane of chastened comedy and hearty and appreciative farce. Nothing could be better, and we look forward with added interest to Sheridan, now that we have tasted the Haymarket brand of Goldsmith.

MR. GEORGE ALEXANDER, restored to health, and anxious to get into harness again, has had a happy idea. During the run of "Rupert of Hentzau," the Wednesday and Saturday matinées will be devoted to performances of "The Prisoner of Zenda," which, as all the world knows, is the forerunner of the later work. By this means the few laygoers who are not acquainted with the earlier book, or who have not seen the "Prisoner," will be able to make good the deficiency. One can imagine the enthusiastic seeker of entertainment having "a day in Ruritania," visiting the St. James's in the morning to see "The Prisoner of Zenda" and Princess Flavia, and in the evening following the adventures of the wicked Rupert and Flavia Regina.

The St. James's, which will be opened before the month has expired, is practically a new edifice, nothing but the four outside walls of the old theatre remaining. Spaciousness, splendour, and comfort have been the aims of the

manager and his architect, Mr. Bloomfield Jackson, dignity and cosiness the mark of Mr. Percy Macquoid, who has designed the decorations.

There is one novel and most admirable idea. A room is to be devoted to the use of the City man and him who comes from the country, spends a day on business in town, goes to the theatre, and catches his last train home. He will bring his dress clothes up in a portmanteau, leave it at the theatre, and in the evening will return there, find a room fitted with every convenience, and there will doff his work-a-day garments and don his livery of pleasure. A most excellent good notion, and one which should appeal to a very large class.

The new piece at the Gaiety is now being busily rehearsed. Jagers has reached another rung of fame—he has provided the foremost playhouse of burlesque with the leading figure of its new play. Mr. Edmund Payne, as Jagers, should have unlimited opportunity. Of the reasons for his visit to Cairo and what happens therefrom you will know at an early date. Meanwhile we will possess our souls in patient anticipation of the gorgeous and enlivening scenes which will present to us in counterfeited the gay doings of the ancient-modern city of His Royal Highness the Khedive by the grace of the British Government.

Miss Edna May promises to return to us in April in a new play, so the Anglo-American Alliance is in no danger of dissolution.

Should Messenger's opera "Véronique" be staged at the Comedy Theatre, we shall be glad to welcome another work of the composer of the delightful "La Basoche." Miss Juliette Nesville will have an important share in the new enterprise.

PHŒBUS.



TO quote the *Field* of a recent date, "cross-country sport is wending its weary way to an accompaniment of moderate monotony." As to the "weary way" and the "moderate monotony," I quite agree with the writer of the above words, but I think that he ought to have written *National Hunt* sport instead of *cross-country* sport, considering that there is none of the latter now, except at Liverpool, and never will be again until the National Hunt Rules are so amended as to allow of steeplechasing over purely natural countries, such as we used to see in the good old days before the present National Hunt authorities put an end to it. That these have an excellent opportunity of doing this, in connection with the so-called point-to-point racing, for which there is so great a demand just now, I have often pointed out in these notes, and it is sincerely to be hoped that they will not neglect it. If they do, it will come in spite of them some day. The British public is a long-suffering body, but it will not for ever put up with such a miserable apology for sport as this season's has been up to now.

At Windsor, on Wednesday and Thursday, the weather was fine, the attendance satisfactory, and the fields large, but where were the horses of any class? Dr. Nikola, by Veracity or Radius out of that once useful jumper Sarah Bernhardt, may be a good four year old, and he opened the ball by winning a Maiden Hurdle Race, but they were a terribly moderate lot that finished behind him, and Miss Heather, who ran third, was subsequently sold for 46 guineas. The best field of the afternoon, in point of quality, was that for the Eton Handicap Hurdle Race, which brought out Turkish Bath, 12st. 11lb., Old Girl, 11st. 2lb., Tornado II., 12st. 4lb., Intimidator, 11st. 13lb., and ten others of sorts. They all had to go down before Mr. Ripley's Servius, by St. Serf out of Ayesha, who carried 11st. 9lb., and may be a useful five year old. Seaside and Tours finished, as their names are written, in front of Breemount's Pride in the Datchet Steeplechase, of three miles, Longchalks, who fell when going well close home, and Glen Royal being behind the first three. This cannot have been the Irish mare's true form.

The "going" was in capital order on the second day, and there were plenty of runners, if nothing of very much account. Mr. Leyland's Westmeath, once thought to be useful, was beaten in the Egham Steeplechase, of three miles, by Whitehead, who made all the running and won by ten lengths, of the other three runners one falling and one refusing early in the race. Mr. Leyland's horses have not done nearly so well since Captain Hope Johnstone gave up managing them.

Mr. Higham's Morello, a really high-class chaser, at two miles especially, was amongst the runners for the Castle Handicap Steeplechase, carrying 12st. 10lb., but something happened to him, and he did not complete the course. Summer Lightning was made favourite from the uncertain Lord Percy, who, on their Hurst Park running, had the best of the weights with Mr. Motion's mare. To this pair was the issue confined, the horse beating the mare easily in the run home by ten lengths. The winner, who is by Autocrat, was once a real good horse, but always a "thief." He seems to have mended his ways somewhat under Mr. Arthur Yates's care, and will probably go on winning in this sort of class.

Plumpton has always been a favourite rendezvous with a certain class of London sportsmen. It is not too big, there is a railway station on the course, and the only "crab" about it is the disgraceful train service. It is not long ago that the Messrs. Pratt took over the management, since which, it is needless to say, improvements have been the order of the day all round. On Friday and Saturday last a well-drawn-up programme attracted plenty of runners, and a brisk meeting was enjoyed by a very fair-sized company.

Old Ebor, who was brought over to this country from Australia by Mr. Gollan, together with Norton, Busaco, and others, some five or six years ago, carried his 13st. to the front of five others in the Ringmer Handicap Steeplechase, and Captain Lambton's old horse looks like coming back to his old form, which was once quite at the top of the tree, over two miles. I remember seeing him at Mr. Arthur Yates's place soon after he had arrived in this country, and he is now back again in his old quarters at Bishop Sutton. He is a beautiful jumper,

so that it is the more worth noticing that in his own country he could never jump a "country," and was confined to racing over hurdles only. But then "the leps are a terror" where he was born and bred, as I once heard a well-known Irish horseman say of a steeplechase course in Ireland, in describing it to an English novice who had gone over to ride there.

Such has been the sport to which we have been treated of late, and, without wishing to be a pessimist, I cannot help thinking that if matters do not improve, and that soon, the end of National Hunt sport cannot be far off. In fact, it looks to me as if one of two things must happen—the abolition of the committee which has brought things to this pass, or the disappearance of the sport.

On Friday (to-morrow) Collins's selected should about win the New Year Handicap Hurdle Race at Hurst Park, where Mill Girl may take the Palace Handicap Steeplechase; whilst Sweet Charlotte and Manifesto will win their engagements there on Saturday, if fancied by their connections.

Our Portrait Illustrations.

WE are happy to be able to produce a most interesting family group, showing Their Imperial Highnesses

the German Emperor and Empress and their two younger sons, Princes Augustus Wilhelm and Oscar. This was the family party which visited the Queen in November, when the two little Princes, who were their German bluejacket's uniforms all through, were constantly in evidence with their tutor in the park, and were taken up to London to see the sights. When the Kaiser and Kaiserin went on to Sandringham, where the former enjoyed excellent shooting, the young Princes stayed at Cumberland Lodge with Prince and Princess Christian.

PATHETIC interest attaches to the portrait of the late Lady Alice Montagu, who died at Davos last week; and in connection with whom a memorial service was held at the Chapel Royal, St. James's, last Monday. Lady Alice Montagu, who was born so recently as 1879, was the last survivor of the beautiful daughters of Consuelo, Duchess of Manchester, who were twins. She was the sister of the Duke of Manchester, and universally beloved.



H. S. Mendelssohn,

LADY ALICE MONTAGU.

Pembroke Crescent, W

LITERARY NOTES.

IT is announced that the competition among publishers for books concerned with the war in South Africa is not so keen as it was expected to be. It would, indeed, surprise me to learn that there was any competition at all, and that for more than one reason. First of all, the war is clearly going to last some time, and while it lasts it is deadly to the refined trade of the publisher, as indeed it is to every trade concerned in the provision of any commodity without which the consumer can rab along. More keenly perhaps than any other traders the publishers are feeling that sufficient for the day, aye, and more than sufficient, is the evil thereof.

Then there will be a great many more books than anybody is likely to want about the war. The *Academy* serves that books may be expected from

Mr. G. W. Steevens, Mr. Winston Churchill, Mr. Julian Ralph, and Mr. Knight, and expresses an amiable interest in the question which will be first in the field. It adds that Mr. Steevens, who is now convalescent, has had plenty of leisure in Ladysmith to write a book about the siege. Personally I am inclined to doubt whether the kind of leisure which is accompanied by enteric fever is likely to be accompanied by literary fecundity. I once stayed in the same house with an officer who was convalescent after enteric, and the marks of convalescence seemed to be a striking combination of indolence of mind and body. Then poor Knight, with his good right arm gone, is hardly likely to have made great progress. For my part, having a kind of curious fancy for tall writing when it has been done with sincerity, I am making up a book for my own entertainment with the help of Mr. Julian Ralph. Whatsoever appears from his pen I cause to be cut out and pasted in a book. The result is a book in something of the G. W. Steevens style, but much better.

The *Academy* list, however, by no means exhausts that of probable books by correspondents, to say nothing of military men. Besides those who have been named there are out in South Africa Mr. Bennet Burleigh and Mr. H. H. S. Pearse, both of whom are sure to break out into volumes which will be valuable from the military as well as from the literary point of view; for these two gentlemen have seen more service than all the rest of the correspondents put together. Mr. Pearse's son, too, who has given in to the modern

weakness for double names, and calls himself Puxley Pearse, is likely enough to write a book, and his first contribution to the *Daily Mail* was distinctly good. Also Mr. Henry Nevinston, some time of Shrewsbury and Christ Church, and then of the East End, and of all sorts of places, has done some very vivid work. But the sympathies shown in some of his earlier letters were hardly calculated to make a volume from him popular.

By the way, a simple method of raising money for the war would be a retrospective tax upon double surnames, and a prospective tax on such names would be quite defensible as a tax on the pomps and vanities. In the last twenty years or so these double names, having no sort of historical or genealogical warrant, have broken out like nettlerash. You will sometimes find four different ones in the same family. They are excusable in the case of the Welsh, who are short of surnames, and are reduced to distinguishing themselves by recording the places which they have visited or the suburbs which are hallowed by their feet. Such is the explanation of surnames, which really exist, such as Palestina-Lewis, Sydenham-Jones, and the like.

The tendency of our novelists to confide their work in the first place to

American magazines cannot be viewed entirely without anxiety. For example, Mrs. Humphry Ward's "Eleanor" is beginning to appear in *Harper's*, and Mr. Barrie's "Tommy and Grizel" in *Scribner's*. The explanation is probably to be found in the better rates of payment in American magazines; and the explanation of that is that the educated public, which has an appetite for sound literature, is larger in America than on this side.

Why at this moment there should be a sudden influx of books on Mr. Ruskin is really rather difficult to see. Mrs. Meynell's monograph is not yet out, but it will probably be more important than the two books which have reached me lately. To the first of these, however, a peculiar interest belongs. It is a translation, by the Countess of Galloway, of three essays in the *Revue des deux Mondes*, by M. de la Sizeranne. I hope to be able to return to it later, for, from Lady Galloway's introduction, I imagine that the great French critic and student has produced a very fascinating book of the religion of beauty as expounded by Ruskin. The publisher is Mr. George Allen. From the same publisher, who has a practical monopoly of Ruskinian publications, comes a collection of readings in John Ruskin's "Fors Clavigera," which is quite valuable. "Fors Clavigera," take it for all in all, is an extraordinary mixture of strength and

weakness, of beauty and absurdity. Hence comes it that the author, who signs her name as Caroline A. Wurtzburg, is warranted in saying, "if ever selection is to be justified, surely it is here." The period, covering 1871 to 1884, is, perhaps, the best. The ninety-six letters which have been laid under contribution "deal with an immense range of subjects and interest; they were written in many places and many moods, sometimes under severest strain, and composed in a style which holds the solid purpose of the author, as it were, in solution, while they are still further complicated by the practical experiment in which he sought to embody his scheme of social reform."

Probably no writer of our time—if, indeed, one can quite say our time—has been the subject of so many commentaries as Mr. Ruskin. Amongst those who have founded books upon his works are Mr. J. M. Mather, Mr. W. G. Collingwood—at least three—Mrs. Ritchie, Mr. E. T. Cook—now editor of the *Daily News*—Mr. C. Waldstein, and Charlotte Brontë. The fact that Charlotte Brontë was among the critics and admirers of Mr. Ruskin helps to remind us for how long a period the master has sometimes charmed and sometimes pained the English reader. In fact, it needs an effort of memory to recollect that John Ruskin was born in 1819, and the only son of a wine merchant in the City.

Messrs. Eyre and Spottiswoode are to be congratulated on a new departure in the equipment of Bibles. The volume called the "Young Scholar's Illustrated Bible," which lies before me, is beautifully printed on thin but tough paper. The illustrations are on quite new lines, and they are apparently from photographs or drawings of the many monuments and ancient inscriptions which are connected more or less closely with the "sacred narrative." The publishers think "the time has arrived when those Bibles prepared for children with more or less imaginary pictures of various well-known events in Bible history may be put aside, as it is now quite clear that they seldom or ever represent the style or ideas of ancient times." To continue the modernity, the volume is bound in neat green canvas and with green edges.

A good deal of interest attaches to "Old Colonial Houses of the Cape of Good Hope," illustrated and described by Alys Fane Trotter. The illustrations show us curious and picturesque houses built by old Dutch Colonists in early times. The labour was that of slaves. The materials came from all parts of the world, from the Dutch Company's possessions in India and from Holland, and in some measure from the Cape itself. The style is in many respects curious and individual, but distinctly picturesque; and Mr. Rhodes's house, Groote Schuur, is a distinctly good modern replica of it. The architect is Mr. Herbert Baker; the publishers are Messrs. Batsford.

Books to order from the library:

- "Parson Kelly." A. Lang and A. E. W. Mason. (Longmans.)
- "The White Dove." W. J. Locke. (John Lane.)
- "The Enchanter." U. L. Silberrath. (Macmillan.)
- "The Long White Cloud." W. P. Reeves. (Marshall.)
- "Chatterton. A Biography." David Masson. (Hodder.)
- "The Downfall of Spain." H. W. Wilson. (Sampson Low.)

LOOKER-ON.



COUNTRY CATERING.

THERE are many difficulties connected with catering for a country household which are not experienced by those who live in London or any of the large provincial towns or cities.

As regards butcher's meat there is little to be said in the way of advice, because country-folk are almost entirely at the mercy of their local butcher, who cuts his joints after his own fashion, according to the exigencies of local demand, and very often in a manner which tends to promote waste in the kitchen. In a very large establishment he need not be master of the situation; but, as a rule, he is, unless it is practicable to obtain meat by rail from any large store in London or a big country town.

The local baker, unless he is in a good-sized town and in a large way of business, is, from a gastronomical point of view, more often than not, an "impossibility"; and there are in consequence many country houses in which everything on the table is of the best, except the bread, the inferiority of which is thus accentuated. In the average household home baking, if it has not been tried, is regarded as a serious undertaking, requiring special apparatus and a specially qualified cook. I propose shortly to give some instructions on this subject, which can be easily carried out, but cannot be embodied in this chapter.

Country and town fish, if the town is near the seacoast, is apt to be of uncertain quality, and unsuitable as regards supply. The former drawback is caused by indirect delivery from the seaport, and there is little or no remedy. The fishmonger, perhaps, brings from an inland fish market, or even if he brings direct from Gainsby or elsewhere, some railway companies are very dilatory in the delivery of even perishable goods. Small parcels of fish can be sent by parcel post, and those who try the plan of having daily supplies by contract direct from dealers, who pack the fish within an hour or so of its being landed, will find it much more satisfactory than they suppose.

But I am not advocating discouragement of local trade. On the contrary, I would suggest that every chance should be afforded to the tradesmen of the locality to improve their methods,

so far as is practicable, before transferring valuable custom elsewhere. As a matter of public policy, the trade of a provincial town should be maintained quite apart from the individually philanthropic point of view. This aspect of housekeeping is peculiarly conspicuous in the matter of groceries, bacon, cheese, etc., and what may be termed general stores. There is something pathetic about the average country town grocer trying to compete with the big London stores—struggling to satisfy every customer, ordering a dozen tins or pots of this or that because someone has asked for one and he cannot get less than a dozen. The ignorance of the tradesman who lays in large quantities of goods for which there is not likely to be any demand, or which are of such inferior quality that his better-class customers reluctantly send their orders to London, is pitiable.

But local shopping in this department has its advantages. The saving in cost per tin or pound by purchasing large parcels of stores is apt to lead to extravagance in consumption. It is easier to check the quantity consumed per week against the quantity purchased for that period. And, by the way, care should be taken in dealing with local shops not to allow the practice of a grocer calling every day for orders. This generally leads to unnecessary orders being given. A little friendly advice to the tradesman will often remedy many of the defects in his methods. It is hard on him, and may be inconvenient to yourself, to leave him before giving him a chance of reforming. A hint now and again as to the lack of flavour in his tea, the coarseness of his sugar, the staleness of his biscuits, or the rankness of his bacon, will be welcomed if he is trading in earnest. A suggestion as to what is being sold in London, how certain brands which he does not supply, and has, perhaps, never heard of, are preferred to others, may prove as advantageous to him as to his better-class customers. I have tried this plan myself with the greatest success, and have in my mind as I write a certain country shop, with an attractively-arranged window and as well stocked as many good London grocers', the charges as moderate as they were extravagant, at a house where the proprietor was dependent almost entirely upon small customers who could not afford to close their accounts, and when his wares were as unsightly as they were unpalatable.

As regards the difference between the local, and, say, the London prices, the margin may be considerably reduced if your local man is open to reason. He cannot sell the same goods at exactly the same price as at a London store, but if you pay his account regularly every week—and why not?—he can afford to deal at a figure almost imperceptibly higher than that which you would pay for goods purchased from a distance and in larger quantities than are necessary.

Considering the title and general spirit of the paper for which I am writing, it seems to me almost superfluous to offer any apology for somewhat digressing from the conventional methods of treating the subject of housekeeping.

CHARLOTTE RUSSE.



IT is always well to write the story of a good run while the memory is fresh and it is still possible to call up a picture of the chase in all its glory.

Therefore I make no apology for beginning at the end, and taking the Quorn gallops of Friday as my theme. This pack have had none the best of luck lately, and had even a week before seen Mr. Fernie's hounds engaged in a most excellent run across that capital line from Houghton to Botany Bay, while they could only work out very moderate results. This is one of the curiosities and anomalies of hunting, that two packs equally good and equally well hunted shall hunt over the same country, and one shall be able to run hard and the other only to work out very moderate sport. It looks very much as if the scent-bearing capacities of foxes varied a good deal. But to return to the Quorn. On Friday, January 12th, Hungarton the fixture, John o' Gaunt was the draw. Though by no means a large covert, this time-honoured home of foxes takes some time to rout out thoroughly. Foxes can and do crawl about in the underwood. When hounds did come out they did so on the lower side—John o' Gaunt is on a slight slope—and raced straight up wind alongside the railway, and then up over the hill by Tilton and down towards the Skeffington Vale. No fox could stand being hustled along, nor any field avoid stringing, and probably pursuers and pursued felt it a relief when the fox, turning sharply to the right, came back by Billesdon village into Potter's Osier-bed. A fresh fox jumped up here, and unluckily the pack divided. The whippers-in were smart in stopping the hounds, and Keyte had all his hounds together when they hit off the line and began to hunt back to Tilton, where the fox had to be left. Thus the run which began in the Quorn country was continued through part of Mr. Fernie's, and ended in the Cottesmore. There was a scent on the grass, and the Master had no intention of wasting time, and we were trotted back to Adams' Gorse. Nor was the pause here a long one. To gallop over the old steeplechase course at a good pace makes demands on

man and horse, and the one-horse men began to drop back until a turn towards Burdett's Covert gave some a chance. At all events, a good many were with hounds when they ran into Ashby Pastures, but several declined to go away with a clean fox that broke towards Gaddesby. One rider viewed the tired fox, very beaten, crawling back. But it was a capital day. In all this district there is some stiff timber, and a rail near Gunn's Lodge brought down Count Trautsmannsdorff, the secretary to the Austrian Embassy. His horse was a bit blown, and gave the gallant sportsman, who had been going well, a nasty fall. A severe shaking and a cut face are, it is to be hoped, the worst results. Now I must ask readers to go back a day to Thursday with Mr. Fernie at Shington, a name which recalls memories of Osbaldeston and Assheton Smith. There was quite a sharp frost, and it was needful in the state of the ground to take out a younger and less pleasant mount in the place of old Confidential, whose legs have to be thought of even more than the rider's neck. A good sportsman told the Master of a fox curled up asleep in a furrow near at hand. Was it indifference or confidence that made him lie so close? He knew of an open drain two or three fields away, and popped in at once. He scarcely reckoned upon terriers, and out he had to come, only to be lost for want of scent when pointing for Sheepthorns. The next fox went off towards Kibworth, and with but a moderate scent the dog pack worked out a moderate hunt over the Ashland valley to Staunton village, where scent once more failed, and this fox too had to be given up. The field was chiefly a local one, Lord Cowley and Lord and Lady Grantley representing the Quorn and the Cottesmore respectively.

Change is always delightful, and I make no sort of apology for going right away from fox to stag, and from Leicestershire to Surrey. Good sport is good sport wherever it is found, and I only express my judgment on the relative merits of the counties by putting that chase last which came first. The meeting-place of the Surrey was at Lingfield, and a hind was uncared in due course. She had a name, but I hate the practice of naming deer. It gives cause to the enemies of sport to abuse us. Naturally they picture a hind or stag answering to its name, and trotting to receive pieces of bread from the hands of the keeper or his daughter. That the fact is quite otherwise makes no difference, and it is unwise to court objections. Private uncaring and unnamed stags—they might be numbered for distinction's sake—are two reforms I should much like to see introduced. Best of all I like the method of a North Country pack of leaving their deer out, though, of course, a wild country is necessary for this. The deer on this occasion took things very easily at first, with the result that hounds hunted up to her with a poor scent, and then hustled her along at a good pace from Eden Bridge to the take. The country about here is tolerably stiff, and at the end of an hour and forty minutes there were a good many who were glad to trot off homewards. But the Surrey Master gives good measure, and second horses were mounted and another hind enlarged.

Just as I was preparing for home, a friend who had met with a slight accident offered me his second horse. This was just the animal for an afternoon ride, comfortable, clever, and with a snaffle mouth. The new hind was obliging, for she did not take us along too fast, but, giving some pretty hunting after a good run, which showed hounds and huntsmen to advantage, allowed herself to be taken near Lingfield, whence the Straun Covert brake took us back as it

had brought us. Having exhausted my own budget, I must for the rest turn to my letters. "The Belvoir on Wednesday is the best I have to tell you of now you have been away." The meet was at Scaford. It was a terribly hard day, and I tired out two horses, both in hard condition and both over seven years old. Hounds ran incessantly, and often fast, for three hours and a-half. There were checks, of course, or none of us would have got home that night, not when even after the same fox. We had, I think, three foxes at least, and chanced on one at the end of the day which gave us blood. Melton Spinney was the starting-point. The fox was some way ahead of us, and it was just as well, for it is, you



Photo.

QUORN HOUNDS: CHANGING HORSES AFTER A RUN.

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know, not the easiest place in the world to get away from, but hounds, working steadily and well, gave us time to get over two brooks and reach them near Thorpe Ashes.

"I fancy Capell lifted the pack here and got on better terms with his fox, and hounds ran well into Stapleford. A fresh fox took us back nearly by the way we had come to Thorpe. I lost touch with them here, but, working along in the rear, got a good start from Sproston (a fresh fox). You can see Bescoty Oaks from the thorns, and it is not more than two miles, some grass and some plough. A turn round Bescoty and back again to Sproston and the end of the day." X.

RACING NOTES.

LAST week I touched lightly on the prospects of the Spring Handicaps, for which the entries had just appeared, but had not space to refer to the nominations for the Ascot Gold Cup. What a race this might be made, if the Ascot executive only understood how to frame conditions for present-day requirements. As it is, there are thirty-two nominations for this year's race, five of which are "sealed." It is eminently satisfactory to see Flying Fox entered, and I have little doubt that he will take the opportunity of proving himself, as I have always believed him to be, a real good stayer. At the same time Perth II. is the champion French stayer, and if he should throw down the gauntlet to the son of Orme we shall probably have a race worth seeing. Champ de Mars is entered, but, much as I have always liked this horse, and good as he undoubtedly is over his own distance, I cannot believe in so substantially built a horse winning over long distances, except in very inferior company. Mazagan, who belongs to the same owner as Champ de Mars, beat Merman and Tom Cringle in October last, so that he probably stays, and may be the best of the pair over two miles. Dominic II. I cannot believe in as a stayer, and My Boy is hardly likely to stand an Ascot Cup preparation. If the Australians are to be dangerous, Grafton may be the one, and I have a sort of idea that the best has not by any means been seen of this horse as yet; but much as I admire the beautiful Irish mare, Irish Ivy, I cannot quite believe in her winning over two and a-half miles. The Waler Merman is entered, and this is a really good horse when at his best, though he appears to lose his form in the most mysterious way at times. The Irish Oppressor I have never been very fond of, but Scintillant, Manners, and Flying Fox's stable companion Calveley are a useful trio. I doubt if any of Lord Rosebery's are likely to be dangerous; Tom Cringle is only a second-class

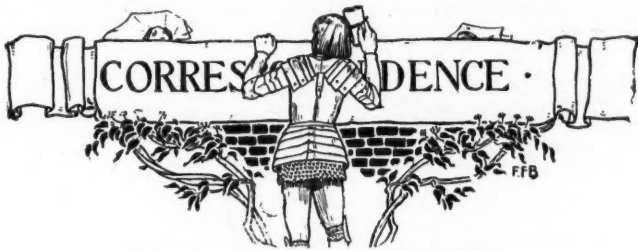


Photo.

HARRY BROUGHTON AND THE TERRIERS.

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handicapper, the "Lads" have not fulfilled expectations up to now, and Flambard has never shown that he can stay. Ercildoune will have a chance of showing whether or not he is what I believe him to be, the second-best of his year, and on that good-looking colt, Calveley, and Proclamation, of whom I have a high opinion, and who is bred to stay, will probably devolve the duty of defending this year's trophy against the foreigners, should anything untoward happen to Flying Fox, which I sincerely trust it may not. OUTPOST.



IMPERIAL YEOMANRY—AN OFFER.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—It has come to our knowledge that many of the Imperial Yeomanry and Volunteers are desirous of practising rifle shooting before going to the Cape, and consequently the metropolitan rifle ranges are unable to cope with the demands for short-range practice. We will, therefore, thank you to make it known that we have pleasure in offering the Imperial Volunteers and Yeomanry the use of our ranges at Aldershot and Neasden, free of charge, until further notice. Our range at Neasden adjoins Neasden Station, twenty minutes from Baker Street Station. Maximum range, 200yds. Our range at Aldershot is ten minutes from Aldershot Station. Maximum range, 250yds.—WM. MOORE AND GREY.

[Two hundred yards and 250yds. are, of course, not great ranges; but they are better than nothing, and may enable men to learn, or pick up again, a little.—ED.]

MICE EATING CROCUSES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—As a constant reader of your most delightful paper, and being a keen amateur gardener, I should feel greatly obliged if you could give me a cure for mice eating crocuses. My garden is full of bulbs for spring, and last year mice ate nearly all the bulbs round the edges. I tried poison, but they preferred the bulbs. I have dogs, and have to be careful of laying down poison. Is there nothing I could cover the soil with to keep them off?—M. A. CONNELL.

[We can only recommend dipping the bulbs before planting in paraffin oil. Nothing else will keep the mice away from crocuses when they are once planted. It is said also that if the bulbs are surrounded by sand the mice will not touch them. Perhaps some reader experienced in this matter will help our correspondent.—ED.]

TERRIER AND POLECAT.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I enclose a photograph, though I fear it is almost too bad to be reproduced, of my fox-terrier bitch Nelly, in the act of carrying a polecat she has just worried to death to her puppies. A polecat is a very queer customer for a terrier, but my little dog positively enjoys handling these most dangerous members of the vermin tribe, and after killing them invariably rushes off to show her puppies the spoil. But they may only sniff, and not touch! Observe the savage gleam of Nelly's eye. She has worked her way up from the ranks, as you might say. She began by catching mice, proceeded to fighting rats, and has now attained the degree of a polecat destroyer. I am sorry to say these creatures are very plentiful here. Nelly was bred by the Baroness Elizabeth Lazzarini, of Graz, and is a descendant of several famous Brockenhurst dogs.—ROSE KÖNIGSWARTER, Schloss Kwasney, Bohemia.



LABOURERS' COTTAGES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The practical benefit to a very large class of your readers of the discussion raised on the best and cheapest labourers' cottages is likely to be very considerable. I venture to hope that you will extend your good offices, and follow up the suggestions of Dr. Bussell and the criticisms of Mr. Eden by giving us a few practical and alternative plans, and the prices at which they can be built. Dr. Bussell's cottages could not be expected to be beautiful, for all they aimed at was to give substantial shelter to a labourer's family for the very low price of £100. If you want beauty you must pay for it. But it is quite possible that an architect could give a little more decorative exterior for the same money, or say what could be done in that way if a certain sum were added. Meantime, as not all architects who can design good cottages have lived in the country, and know exactly what the labourer wants or does not want, I hope that the following hints may be of service. 1. Labourers now wish to live *in the village*, or as near to it as possible. Their wives insist on it,

and rightly so. The children do not get wet going to school, the shop is handy, and there are neighbours to help them if they are ill. And they often are ill, let alone the frequent additions to their families. 2. No cottage should be set back more than a few yards from the road. Kind proprietors often give them a garden plot 30yds. deep between the road and the door. Result—that every hundredweight of coals, every faggot, every loaf of bread, every stone of flour, etc., has to be carried by the woman, if by no one else, from the road to her door, and a path, which is a waste of land and labour, has to be kept clean and tidy. 3. Make the kitchen *always* the largest and best room, with a scullery. This may be rough enough (but need not be absolutely uncomfortable and repulsive) for the dirty work. They sit in the kitchen and eat their meals there. One fire thus serves for the whole house. They like a little parlour in which to put the children's prizes, cheap pictures, mugs, worsted flowers, etc., to look at on Sundays. It does them good. Let the kitchen garden and potato plot be *at the back*—it is seldom ornamental—while a narrow sunny strip in front gives them a little flower garden to make pretty and smart. If you could add to your plans fixed estimates from some highly respectable firm of builders you would add still more to the favour conferred on—A COUNTRY LANDLORD.

INTERESTING TO FALCONERS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The interesting article on falconry which appeared in COUNTRY LIFE for October 28th gives an account of the work done by a trained goshawk, which eventually refused to answer its owner's call to return to him, and after roving about for some months was shot. I should imagine that it is not uncommon for birds of this description to refuse to answer the call to return, judging from the number of apparently trained falcons which have been seen in the Isle of Thanet during the autumn. The influx of these trained birds has been quite unusual, and has resulted in my being a considerable loser, for I have several lofts of racing pigeons, and the birds are exercised daily, often settling in the fields of stubble surrounding the lofts, which are situated near the edge of the cliffs overlooking the channel, and unfortunately some of the most valuable ones have been killed by falcons and hawks. Early one morning in October I watched a falcon hovering over a field near the lofts; it swooped down and picked up a pigeon. I shouted, and it dropped the bird; on taking it up I found it was dead. It had two large wounds in the breast. The pigeon had recently won a first prize in a long-distance race. The falcon had evidently escaped from captivity, for it had a small bell attached to it, which was plainly audible while the bird was in a hovering position. Near by are some telegraph poles; on one of these the falcon would frequently take up its station and allow anyone to approach to within a few yards of it, and, after helping itself to at least half-a-dozen pigeons, it was shot. A few days before the arrival of that one, another even more destructive one appeared about my premises. It would sit on the roof of the dwelling-house and on the chimneys and sometimes on the pigeon lofts. It killed and ate a pet jackdaw on the top of an outhouse, and it took away two game bantam cockerels, besides killing several pigeons, and it seized a young cat which was under some low bushes. It refused to enter a cage trap I had set for it, and eventually it came to a bad end. It rested on the spire of a church, and the leathers round its legs became entangled in some ornamental iron work. It hung screaming in the air. I happened to be on the spot, and sent to ask some men who were working on a building near to rescue it. One of them, most pluckily, went up and cut the leathers, and brought down the falcon amidst the cheers of a crowd of people who had gathered around. I put the bird in a large cage and offered it food, but two days afterwards it died. I suppose from shock to the system, as its legs were both injured. Another falcon, wearing leathers, also appeared, just afterwards; it killed several pigeons, but seemed to prefer some cage birds which were placed near an open window. Twice it was seen to enter the window, which was afterwards kept shut; one day while we were seated at lunch the falcon dashed itself against the glass, and fell partly stunned to the ground. It was painful to witness the terror displayed by the cage birds, more particularly a bullfinch. This falcon was shot the same afternoon. Another one, about the same time, chased a racing pigeon owned by a fancier in the neighbourhood; so keen was it in pursuit that it dashed into the bolting wires on the loft, to the great astonishment of the fancier, who was inside. He caught it and sold it for a shilling to a public-house keeper. This falcon has also a leather strap attached to each leg, and is a particularly tame and handsome bird. There are still several about the Thanet coast. I presume they are attracted by the pigeons which are kept in pretty considerable numbers in the district. An old "pot-hunter" stated recently that he had carried a gun "regular" for forty years and had never seen so many birds of the hawk tribe, either winter or summer, as lately, and added that he had shot more than a dozen; several of them were different from any he had seen before. Another sportsman of the same class informed me he had shot six hawks of various kinds in three days. One was a very fine bird; he was told it was a sea-eagle. He sold it to a gentleman on the road for 2s. 6d. I bought a bittern, a purple sand-piper, a grey phalarope, and a curlew sand-piper from this man. They were all shot in the district. A birdcatcher lost his best decoy bird, which was "braced" when a merlin seized it, and was caught in the trap. The man said he pulled the merlin's head off. Two peregrines and a goshawk took up a station during October in the thickly-wooded grounds which surround the residence of the late Sir Moses Montefiore. I have frequently watched them sweep gracefully out of sight; their flight is swift, strong, and circling, and I have heard their screams of "kek, kek, kek." The goshawk appears very tame; it has let me get near enough to it to distinctly see the narrow white line above the eye and ear coverts. It cries "kurk, kairk, kirk," as it takes its long, gliding, and low flight, circling but rarely, and steering itself by the action of its tail. The removal of the high tower at the Granville Hotel, St. Lawrence-on-Sea, may account for some of these birds being seen at closer quarters, for it was a favourite resting-place for many rare birds of prey, and the remains of numerous pigeons, with flying-club rings on their legs, found there show the hawks had selected that place to devour the birds they caught, probably when crossing the sea. A few Sundays ago several men stood at the foot of the cliffs near the North Foreland Lighthouse watching two falcons engaged in a battle royal. The birds dashed at each other most violently, making feathers fly in all directions. They tussled and fought over the sea, sometimes turning over and over till they dropped quite close to the water; then up they flew, and, rising above the cliffs, dashed at each other again, then separating and falling together on to the edge of the cliff. After a prolonged struggle, fiercely fighting with beak and talon, they fell together on to the sands at the bottom of the cliff. The men went up to them; one bird flew slowly away, the other lay panting on the shore with its beak wide open. Its eyes were torn and bleeding, and it had some severe lacerations in various parts of the body. Its tongue was severed and the feathers

completely stripped from both thighs. One of the men broke its neck "to put it out of its misery." The other combatant was picked up the next morning in a dying state. It was very badly wounded, and one eye was torn out. It had a metal band round its leg. Between the North and South Foreland the wild peregrine falcons are not uncommon, and their nests are frequently observed in the cliffs. Near the gap where the cable is laid a pair of falcons built their nest last summer, close to the spot where a pair of wild blue pigeons had got young. They did not destroy them or appear to molest them in any way. The half-consumed loaves of pigeons wearing club rings and stamped with race marks are often picked up by constabularies and others who have disturbed falcons and hawks in the midst of a meal. Many a brave pigeon racing homeward falls a victim to the numerous hawks and falcons which infest this coast. Kestrels, locally called wind hawks, are common in the district. I believe they are the least injurious of any birds of prey, so far as the pigeon flyer is concerned. Observation has convinced me that the kestrel is most useful, especially to the farmer and gardener. It destroys an enormous number of mice and rats, and helps to keep down the clouds of sparrows which live in the large fields and consume the seed crops. Four merlins shot recently are being set up by a local taxidermist. They, too, destroy numbers of sparrows, and will not hesitate to take a pigeon or partridge, and even a decent-sized chicken. They possess any amount of courage, and stick to their prey with great tenacity. The hobby hawk is more common on the coast during the autumn than at any other period of the year. He waits about over hedges and bushes, and seizes the small migratory birds as they pass over on their way to southern climes. The kite has been observed several times. His forked tail and large sharp-pointed wings render him recognisable as he soars high over the cliffs. I have not heard of his doing any damage among pigeons. Like the wild falcon he is very shy, and keeps his distance from dwelling-houses and the adjoining poultry-yards. A magnificent buzzard has fallen to the gun, and is being "set up" with the merlins. Another buzzard was seen for more than a week flying in the neighbourhood of a town, and resting often on the pinnacle of a church. Several rooks perpetually chased it, so that it had not much opportunity of preying upon other birds, and no doubt it retired in disgust, for I have not heard of its being shot, though a number of guns were on its track. Two golden eagles were shot in Thanet last year; from the appearance of one I imagine it had escaped from confinement. Both the hen and marsh harrier have been observed at various times, and several have been shot. A truly handsome bird is the male hen-harrier. He may frequently be seen over Mins'ter Marshes or Sandwich Flats, hovering a few feet above the ground.—H. ORMOND.

THE SPEY CAST.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I write to ask if you could publish in your valuable paper some instantaneous photographs of the Spey cast, showing the principal phases of this cast. I see by a recent article in the *Field* that none of the gillies on Speyside are now able to do this cast properly, but there are surely many salmon-fishers who are experts at it, and amongst these there would doubtless be found someone who would be willing to be photographed making this cast. I make this request because I believe a really thorough set of photographs taken in suitable positions—viz., facing and end on—would be of practical value to those of us who have no other means of learning. I am taking up salmon-fishing again after an interval of several years, and in Canada, where the greater part of my limited experience has been gained, the Spey cast is not used. It would be very useful to me on the river I now fish.—VIATOR.

[We are obliged by our correspondent's suggestion, and shall do our best to meet his wishes. A fisherman who has done the Spey throw (as they prefer to call it, rather than Spey cast, on Speyside) ever since the age of 10, and is a thorough master of the throw, has kindly offered himself as a model, and we propose to arrange for photographing him in the different positions (or if necessary to have drawings made) that we hope will give all the instruction that can be given by illustration. It will probably be necessary, in case photography is found to explain the body movements sufficiently, to supplement the photographs with diagrams showing the position of the line at different points in the throw. Also, it may be necessary to wait some time for the necessary combination of sunlight and the convenience of the model.—ED.]

CURIOUS MARKING OF MARE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I think the enclosed may interest you, the dark portion of the mare's coat showing the distinct outline of the human face. The mare is the property of Lord George Sanger, and I photographed her at Deal. Perhaps you may think the photograph worthy of reproduction in COUNTRY LIFE.—J. R. GOODYER.



INTERESTING TREE GROWTHS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Having read your article in COUNTRY LIFE for Decem'ber 23rd on "Interesting Tree Growths in English Parks," I am sending you a photograph of one of these freaks of Nature. The tree is a very old wych elm, which is a great ornament to the park of Sawthorpe Hall in Lancashire, and although having only one root, it appears above ground in four separate trunks. We believe this tree to be a rare specimen of eccentric growth in the wych elm.—N. L. K. S.



ZEBRA MULES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Some years ago the famous African pioneer, Major Lugard, expressed his opinion "that an attempt should be made to obtain zebra mules by horse or donkey mares, because such mules would be found excessively hardy and impervious to the dreaded 'tsetse fly' and other climatic diseases, for," he adds, "everyone knows that the paucity of mules both for mountain batteries and transport purposes has long been one of the greatest difficulties in our otherwise almost perfect Indian Army Corps." At the present moment, when the war in South Africa lends additional weight to his words, and the question of a proper mule transport has given the authorities so much trouble and expense, it is interesting to find that Major Lugard's suggestion has been taken up in a practical manner that bids fair to lead to the desired results. Some five years ago Professor Cossar Ewart, F.R.S., Professor of Natural History at the Edinburgh University, first started his experiments in the breeding of hybrids—an extension of Lord Morton's experiment as far back as 1849—at his place, The Bungalow, Penicuik, N.B. The object in view was to breed an animal hardy enough to be able to resist tsetse fly, and one in all respects adapted for transport purposes. The Professor's first experiment proved disappointing, for two of the hybrids which he inoculated subsequently died, though they proved their superior vigour of constitution over that of horses, inasmuch as they were able to resist the disease for some time, while a mare inoculated simultaneously died almost immediately. At the last Royal Highland Show Professor Ewart's hybrids were the principal attraction, and the Prince of Wales was amongst those who warmly congratulated him on his efforts. At the present time the hope and pride of the Bungalow stables is Romulus, a fine young hybrid by the zebra stallion Matoppo out of Mulatto, a West Highland pony from the Isle of Rum, and belonging to Lord Arthur Cecil. The Isle of Rum ponies are conspicuous for their colour—a jet black—and from the resemblance they bear to the well-bred black horses often to be met with in Spain at the present day; their origin on the island has been fixed at the period when a portion of the ill-starred Spanish Armada was wrecked off the coast of the Western Highlands. Whether this theory is correct cannot be definitely decided, but it is plausible enough to be accepted in default of another. Romulus will next year reach the age of maturity—four years—when Professor Ewart proposes mating him with an Irish or Scottish mare, this being the completion of Lord Morton's unfinished experiment. The Professor is hopeful of being rewarded for his long and patient efforts by the establishing of a race of hardy and vigorous animals that should prove of immense value in our service of mountain batteries and transports in South Africa and elsewhere. These experiments are being carried out by the Professor at a large annual personal expenditure, and as they will undoubtedly be of great value to science, and possibly of real practical utility to the State, they certainly appear to deserve some material assistance from the Government in order that no stone may be left unturned to compete them.—BARONESS DE RENDELL, Tower Hill, Ascot.